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"CHRIST OUR LIFE:"

*READINGS FOR SHORT SERVICES
AND QUIET MEDITATION.*

BY

REV. FREDERICK WHITFIELD, M.A.

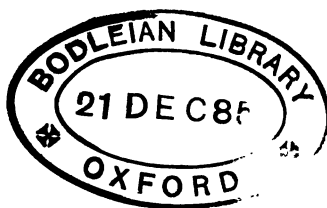
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PREFACE.

THE following pages are issued with two objects:—

First; they may be used for daily meditation on rising or retiring to rest, in the quiet chamber, when none but God is near.

Secondly; for short services in sick chambers, or for invalids. Many a child of God suffers from infirmities of such a nature that none but a very short service can be borne. This may be carried out by reading the whole chapter, or a portion of it, from which the text is taken; then the address, and the poem. This may be preceded or followed by a short prayer, thus compressing the entire service within ten minutes or a quarter of an hour.

I am aware of the many and great deficiencies which mark these addresses. But they have been issued with one desire and one aim—to glorify Jesus. May He thus use them, by His Holy Spirit, for this end is my earnest prayer!

ST. MARY'S, HASTINGS,
October, 1885.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
"JESUS ONLY" (Matt. xvii. 8)	1
"WE WOULD SEE JESUS" (John xii. 21).	4
CHRIST AND SELF (2 Cor. iv. 5).	8
"HE IS PRECIOUS" (1 Peter ii. 7)	12
"HE LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME" (Gal. ii. 20)	16
"DRAW ME, WE WILL RUN AFTER THEE" (Song i. 4)	20
"THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST" (Phil. iii. 8)	25
GOD'S MIGHTY POWER (John xii. 21)	31
ALONE WITH JESUS	34
THE RESTING-PLACE (Psalm cxvi. 7-9)	39
"THE PEACE OF GOD" (Phil. iv. 7).	43
THE WORD OF GOD (Isa. lv. 10, 13)	49
THE SAVIOUR'S CALL (Mark iii. 13, 14)	53
THE PRAYER OF JABEZ (1 Chron. iv. 10).	57
"REST IN THE LORD" (Psalm xxxvii. 7)	61
"THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH" (Neh. viii. 10)	67
"PRAISE YE THE LORD" (Ps. cxlvii. 1)	73
"ABIDE IN MY LOVE" (John xv. 10)	76
"THE LITTLE FOXES" (Cant. ii. 15).	80
"HE THAT TILLETH HIS LAND SHALL HAVE PLENTY OF BREAD" (Prov. xxviii. 19)	84
SIN (1 Tim. v. 24, 25)	89
SERVICE, SEPARATION, CONSECRATION	94
WALKING, WORKING, GROWING (Col. i. 10)	98
"MEROZ" (Judges v. 23)	101

	PAGE
CHRISTIAN INSENSIBILITY AND INDIFFERENCE (Judges	
v. 16, 17)	106
"GO IN THIS THY MIGHT" (Judges vi. 14)	111
"THE ALPHA AND OMEGA" (Rev. i. 11-13)	117
TWO CRYING SINS	121
TRIFLING WITH GOD (1 Kings xiii. 1-7)	126
"WHERE IS THE GUEST-CHAMBER?" (Mark xiv. 14)	131
THE WASTE HOUSE (Hag. i. 1-11)	137
MOAB (Jer. xlviii. 11)	141
"THE LORD HIMSELF" (1 Thess. iv. 16)	145
"OUR GOD SHALL COME" (Ps. i. 5)	149
"THE PROVERB" AND THE "SAYING;" OR THE SIGN OF THE LORD'S SECOND ADVENT (Ezek. xii. 21-28; 2 Peter iii. 2-4)	154
"THE TIME IS SHORT" (1 Cor. vii. 29-32)	159
THE CHRISTIAN'S LOT (Dan. xii. 13)	164
"THE MORNING COMETH AND ALSO THE NIGHT" (Isa. xxi. 12)	168
"THE HEART'S DESIRE AND PRAYER" (Rom. x. 1-4)	173
"EVERY MAN WALKETH IN A VAIN SHOW" (Ps. xxxix. 6)	177
"THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS" (Num. xxiii. 10)	182
"ALMOST PERSUADED" (Acts xxvi. 28)	186
REST. (Micah ii. 10)	191
"THIS IS INDEED THE CHRIST" (John iv. 42)	195
THE GRACE OF GOD (Titus ii. 11)	200
PEACE AND TRUST	204
THE LORD'S MESSAGE TO HIS CHURCH (Cant. ii. 13)	209
"ALONE WITH JESUS" (John viii. 1-11)	213
"HEALED" (Mark v. 27-29)	218
THE STONY GROUND (Mark iv. 5, 6)	223
THREE SOLEMN WORDS (Psalm xxxii. 5, 6; lxxvii. 19; xxxvii. 23)	228
THE SOUL'S DESIRE (Psalm xxvii. iv.)	233
THE MUSTER-ROLL	239

“JESUS ONLY.”

MATTHEW xvii. 8.

OH that “Jesus only—none but Jesus,” were indeed the one desire of all the Lord’s redeemed people!

It will be unreservedly the heart-utterance of all in glory, as their unwavering, enraptured gaze for ever rests on *Him*.

But while all His people say, “None but Jesus,” as regards the foundation upon which they are resting for salvation, as regards a shelter from the wrath to come, and while they all say, “None but Jesus,” as regards a refuge in trouble, alas! all do not say, “*None but Jesus*,” as regards their *springs of enjoyment*. No; you see very many going into the world for enjoyment, for pleasure, for recreation, as it is called. “*Harmless recreation!*” Oh what a tale this tells! How it tells how little the attractiveness of Jesus is perceived by His people—how little they are enamoured by His loveliness, fascinated by His beauty! If it were so, they would find their hours of pleasure and of recreation in feasting on Him, and they would say, “Jesus is enough—none but Jesus as the source of en-

A

joyment." They would not ask whether it was wrong to go to worldly amusements. They would feel that they wanted none of these things, that their cup of enjoyment was full to the very brim—running over. Earth's pleasures would be no pleasures to them; they would rather feel a distaste for them.

Ah! the heart that is occupied with Jesus cannot relish aught else—can have *no joy apart from Him*.

Reader, let your life's aim be His glory. Whatever you do, wherever you go, let your whole interest be centered in Him and in advancing His kingdom. Set your mind to live as a *risen* one, a *blood-bought* one. Let those around you see that yours are not *cold principles*, but that you, your tastes, your *affections*, and all things, are changed; that you can no longer enjoy anything that does not please Him. Oh that the language of your heart may be, "*Nothing without Him, everything with Him*," and your prayer constantly, "Intensify my love to Thee, and keep me ever satisfied, abundantly satisfied, with Thee. Let my heart burn within me as I hear Thy sweet voice speaking to me day by day. And consecrate me, dear Lord, that I may lead a whole-hearted, devoted life to Thee, and *for* Thee, till Thou shalt come to take me home."

JESUS ! Thou Name of magic power
To all of heavenly birth !
Jesus ! Thou never-failing store
Of richest, sweetest worth !

My freshest, purest, sweetest springs
In Jesu's love I find ;
While from that Fount the Spirit brings
Rich treasures to my mind.

Each bitter grief—each anxious care—
Thy love, Thy goodness knows ;
My wounded spirit only there
In Jesus finds repose.

My love may meet a kindred heart,
But not a heart like *Thine* ;
From Jesu's love I cannot part—
He cannot part with mine.

Thy love alone, Thou precious Lord,
Can cheer my fainting soul,
Can speak the welcome, gladd'ning word
That makes my spirit whole.

With Thee I cannot feel alone,
I cannot be forgot ;
Though friends are changing one by one,
My Jesus changeth not.

My future path I know may be
A path of anxious care ;
But love has planned that path for me—
That love in which I share.

The Shepherd's bosom bears each lamb
O'er rock, and waste, and wild ;
The object of that care I am—
I am the Shepherd's child.

Under the shadow of Thy love,
Lord, let me ever dwell ;
Till Thou shalt call me hence above,
Its hidden depths to tell.

F. WHITFIELD.

“ WE WOULD SEE JESUS.”

JOHN xii. 21

THE heart of man cannot see Christ till Christ reveals Himself to it. If the Spirit of God has not shown you the Saviour, you are still in ignorance, in darkness, in death. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God”—and seeing Christ as his Saviour is one of them; “neither CAN he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Jesus must *show* Himself, or we shall see no beauty in Him that we should admire Him. But how “show” Him? Show Him, so that you can no longer look upon *yourself* with complacency, but with deep self-abhorrence. Show Him, so that the whole heart be bowed down before God, and the soul cling to the Saviour as its life, its all.

Has the Spirit of God thus shown Jesus to you? If not, of what *real* value is all your knowledge of Jesus? Would it not be far more *honest* of you to have done with that hollow, worthless profession of religion you are so tenaciously grasping? It may serve you for a little while. But, oh! dear friend, remember the solemn meeting at the bar of God, towards which you are hastening. There will be no masks there! No religious subterfuges there!

The holy eye of God shall scatter them all like chaff before the wind. Oh, fling away these flimsy coverings, and bow at the feet of Jesus! You like reality—honesty before *men*. Be honest yourself before *God*! Wear no hypocritical religious garb. Carry no lie in your right hand. Ask the Lord to show you your state as a sinner before Him. Ask Him to “show” you Jesus putting away sin by His finished work on Calvary. Thus will you be a *true* man; thus will your eyes be open to see Jesus; and to see Jesus is everlasting life.

Child of God, remember this every step of your way to heaven—you cannot see Jesus till He show Himself to you. You sometimes open the Word, and you read passage after passage without profit, without comfort, without any blessing. Ah! He is teaching you the deeply needed lesson that you cannot see Him of yourself. Then, how does the conviction of our ignorance force itself upon us! How is our dulness and blindness and earthliness of spirit disclosed to our astonished view! Be not discouraged, dear reader, at this. The Lord is teaching you. It is the Lord’s lesson you are learning in this painful way. We are not willing to learn it *as deeply as He would have us*; therefore He makes us feel it. Be not cast down, but go in humility to His feet and say, “Lord, teach me.” “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of Thy law.” “Show me Jesus, and I shall be satisfied.” Oh! remember it always—the Lord must show

Himself, or you can never see Him. Wait on Him, then! Wait patiently, but wait continually! It is only as He *shows* Himself your soul can learn. It is only as He *shows* Himself you can grow in grace; and you will become like Him then, for you will *see* Him.

My heart is night, my soul is steel,
I cannot see, I cannot feel,
For light, for heat, I must appeal
To Jesus!

He died, He lives, He reigns, He pleads,
There's love in all His acts and deeds,
All, all a guilty sinner needs
In Jesus!

Though some should scoff and some should blame,
I'll go, in spite of fear and shame,
I'll go to Him, because His name
Is Jesus!

What the gold is to the mine,
What the stem is to the vine,
What the heart is at the birth,
What the sun is to the earth,
What the moon is to the sea,
That is my gracious Lord to me.

What the hand is to the lute,
What the breath is to the flute,
What the estate is to the heir,
What the autumn to the year,
What the flower is to the bee,
That is Jesus Christ to me.

What the light is to the eye,
What the rainbow to the sky,
What the sea is to the river,
What the gift to the receiver,
What the friend is to the plea,
That is God's dear Son to me.

What rest is after eager haste,
What honey is unto the taste,
What fragrance is unto the smell,
Or springs of water to a well,
Or crimson sunset o'er the lea,
All this and more is Christ to me.

What is the mother to the child,
Or what the guide in pathless wild,
What oil is to the troubled wave,
Or ransom to the tortured slave,
Whate'er is truth or liberty,
That, and far more, is Christ to me.

What port is to the tempest-tost,
Or father's voice to children lost,
What is the bridegroom to the bride,
Her life, her glory, and her pride,—
What beauty is in all I see,
E'en that is Jesus Christ to me !

CHRIST AND SELF.

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."—2 COR. iv. 5.

THE two great things the Christian has continually to watch are Christ and self, and to see that the right relation between the two is preserved. Observe how the Apostle puts it here. He was about to mention "Christ Jesus the Lord." But before he does that he mentions "ourselves." Yes, before we begin to say anything about Christ, let us see that *we ourselves* are in our right place in relation to Him. Let us see that self is hidden and ever kept in the shade. "*Not ourselves*"—this is our right place before Christ. If we stand *between* another person and the sun, we hinder the light from shining. Christ is the Sun. St. Paul wanted, in this verse, to let the light of that Sun shine on the Church. Therefore *he gets out of the way*, so as to let Christ's rays fall undiluted upon them—"not ourselves." Reader, if, like Paul here, you are going to mention "Christ Jesus the Lord," either by word or by conduct, see that you put self out of the way, lest you should intercept the Sun's glorious rays—"not ourselves."

But now that "Christ Jesus the Lord" has been

named, he brings in *self*. Yes, self must have its place. The great point is that it have the *right* place. St. Paul shows us in this verse what is the right place. He puts "ourselves" not *before* Christ, but *after* Christ. "We preach *not* ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord." But now that he has brought in Christ he brings in self—"And ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." Self is not to be crushed or destroyed. It is to be *used*. Do not put it *before* Christ, but *after* Christ. "*Follow thou Me*" is His word. Self is right if you keep it in its right place. It is *vile* if you bring it before Christ. It is vile when you bring it *after* Christ. But still, through God's infinite grace, it can come in *there* as a *servant* to Christ. Self is a bad *master*, but through God's grace it may be a useful *servant*. It can only serve when it is *after* Christ. God will only use it when it is after Christ. All the sin, all the confusion, all the disorder in the world, has arisen, not so much from self as from self being in the wrong place. "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God." It turns on a point of *order*. All men seek God some time, but not *first*. It is to have Christ first, not *second*; Christ *supreme*, not on an *equality*; Christ on the throne, not among the subjects; Christ the *King*, not one of the royal family.

The words of our blessed Lord which I have just quoted are very striking. They touch the secret spring of earth's many maladies. Many will seek Christ, but the point is this—Is He sought *first*?

It is not our happiness, as an end, that we are to seek. It is not even our own spiritual welfare we are to seek, *as an end*. Nay more, it is not even the salvation of souls we are to seek, as an end. We are to seek something to which even all these things are secondary, something which, at the same time, *includes* all these—the glory of God. Mark how our Lord Himself shows us this in the divine order in which the Holy Spirit has recorded His words—"I have *glorified* Thee on the earth." Then we have the next point—"I have *finished the work* which Thou gavest me to do." Lastly, we have the prayer for *Himself*—"And now, O Father, glorify Thou *me*." This must be our order too. First, the glory of Christ; secondly, the work given us to do; lastly, the prayer for ourselves.

"The wrong order of right things is often the most serious of evils. Disproportionate truth is the worst of errors. Therefore we are told that one feature of the restored world will be that 'the last shall be first and the first last.' This is one of the great ends which the Gospel is labouring to carry out; to re-establish the series; to show us which should be first and which should be second; to place things in the foreground which sin has put in the rear, and to put at a distance as secondary what man has been accustomed to put foremost as primary."

Christian! see that Christ is first. See that you go from everything to Him. Count *everything* the

shadow and only Christ the substance. The more we continually go in everything here from the shadow to the substance, from the visible to the spiritual, from everything to Christ, the truer, the holier, the happier, we shall become.

Oh how sweet it is to me
Before my gracious Lord to fall,
Talk to Him continually,
Make my blessed Jesus all !

Other pleasures I have sought,
Tried the world a thousand times,
Peace pursued, but found it not,
For I still retained my crimes.

Never could my heart be blessed
Till from sin I found it freed ;
Jesus now has me released,
I in Him am free indeed.

Saviour, bind me to Thy cross,
Let Thy love possess my heart,
All besides I count but dross—
Christ and I can never part.

In His blood such peace I find,
In His love such joy is given ;
He who is to Jesus joined
Finds on earth a very heaven.

"HE IS PRECIOUS."

I PETER ii. 7.

How unspeakably precious is Christ "set forth as a propitiation for sin"—"who Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree!" "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." How all that is within me leaps towards such a Redeemer! It is a provision for my forgiveness in which both heart and conscience can rest. God is "a just God, and yet the justifier of the ungodly." It is not the Divine nature only that demands atonement for sin: our human nature demands it fully as much.

It is therefore for every one of us a practical question, Have we received Christ into our own hearts? Is He practically potent and precious in our daily lives? Does He inspire, and sanctify, and comfort us in daily experiences? Can we say of Him, "Christ, who is our life"—"The Lord Jesus Christ, who is our hope"? Were we suddenly called to stand before God, should we be "found in Him"?

It is not a question of notions or beliefs about Christ, but of living experience of Him, practical

appropriation of the grace that He brings, practical quickening by the life that He is.

Everything, therefore, turns upon your individually receiving Christ, upon your religious experience of Christ, linking your life to His life, rooting yourself in Him, as the branch is in the vine. Until you have this experience of Him you cannot, in the very nature of things, know how precious He is; how great, and gracious, and loving a Saviour He is; how "plenteous" His redemption, how freely He forgives the sinful, how gently He speaks to the penitent, how wisely He helps us in our struggles, how patiently He restores us in our falls, how tenderly He comforts us in our sorrows, how radiant with immortal hope He makes our mortal life.

Do you, then, so trust in Christ? Have you so received His atonement? Have you any experimental understanding of the things concerning which I have spoken? Is Christ precious to you above all things else—above pleasure, and wealth, and sin, and friends, and life itself? Is He nearest you in thought and dearest in affection—the supreme good and joy of your life?

And in your practical estimates of things, is that desired by you most eagerly which brings you the nearest to Him—the converse, the prayers, the hymns, the preaching, the Church, the ordinances? Does that which makes you know the most of Him attract and delight you most?

And if you are indeed His and know His love,

it will be a good thing to try yourself often and ask, If such and such a comfort were taken away, could I stay myself upon His love? If I had none of these things, would He suffice? If He should say, "Keep all without me," or, "Give up all and keep me alone," which should I choose? If I had now to leave everything and sit at His feet, would this be happiness and joy to me?

Some Christians are satisfied to go on without this—taking as much of the world as they decently can, satisfied with a practical distance from God, without conscious peace and joy, and without anything in the tone, or spirit, or conversation that savours of heaven. Reader, beware of this! If you know and love Him, *live* for Him. A Christian that leaves not at every turn a savour of Christ is a denial of Him!

"I've found a joy in sorrow,
A secret balm for pain,
A beautiful to-morrow
Of sunshine after rain.
I've found a branch of healing
Near every bitter spring,
A whispered promise stealing
O'er every broken string.

I've found a glad hosanna
For every woe and wail,
A handful of sweet manna
When grapes from Eshcol fail.
I've found a Rock of Ages
When desert wells were dry,
And after weary stages
I've found an 'Elim' nigh—

An 'Elim' with its coolness,
Its fountains and its shade !
A blessing in its fulness,
When buds of promise fade !
O'er tears of soft contrition
I've seen a rainbow light—
A glory and fruition,
So near !—yet out of sight.

My Saviour ! Thee possessing,
We have the joy, the balm,
The healing and the blessing,
The sunshine and the psalm ;
The promise for the fearful,
The 'Elim' for the faint,
The rainbow for the tearful,
The glory for the saint."

**“HE LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF
FOR ME.”**

GALATIANS II. 20.

MARK the expression, “He loved *me*.” Not my sins—not my many transgressions—not my wilfulness, waywardness, and obstinacy—not my past life of ingratitude and provocation! No; He looked upon all these with righteous and holy abhorrence. He hated all these things, but He loved *me*—He loved my soul. And what proof did He give of this? The Apostle answers, “He loved me, and gave *Himself* for me.” Oh wondrous gift! He gave not His kingdom, not His crown, not His glory, not His boundless wealth! He gave up these indeed; “though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we, through His poverty, might become rich;” but—marvellous grace—“He gave *Himself*!” He gave Himself to Pilate’s judgment, to Herod’s mockery, to the soldiers’ scorn, to the people’s frenzy! And there He hung between two thieves, His piercing cry rending the blackened vault above, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me!” There He hung, His face marred more than any man’s, His head, His hands, and His feet pierced and bleeding, torn and mangled, with the iron fangs and the thorny

crown! There He hung, under the frown of Heaven; and cast out by the world; the taunt and sneer of the passer-by, and the song of the drunkard in the street! And He gave Himself to *this*! Oh, the love of God, the grace of Jesus! Oh that these words were written on the portals of the sky, in the hues of the rainbow and the brightness of the sun, so that every sinner on earth might read them: "GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE."

"He loved me, and gave Himself for me." Precious, precious words! Sinner, dost thou need encouragement to come to Jesus? Then here it is. Perhaps you look back on your past life and see it stained with crimes of the deepest dye. You see sins the very thought of which suffuses your countenance with a blush. You see sins against light, wilful sins, secret sins, open sins—a multitude that no man can number, rising like a mountain to your view, and you are ready to exclaim, "Can God love *me*? Impossible!" Yes, He does; He loves *you*. He hated all these things, but He loved you, and loves you still. "He loved you, and gave Himself for you." Oh! come, then, to that Saviour, and let nothing keep you back. Wait not till you are better—till you are more fit for Him. Wait for nothing. Come just as you are. *He* is willing and waiting; why should *you* delay? "This Man

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receiveth sinners," is the name and character by which He is known. "This Man receiveth sinners," is written in legible characters over the mercy-seat, inviting you to draw near. "This Man receiveth sinners," is the Gospel echo which sounds aloud from Calvary, and has been re-echoed for the last two thousand years. Listen, sinner, to the sound ! Let its melody fall on thy weary and heavy-laden heart. It shall fill thy soul with gladness ; it shall fill thy lips with praise. Angels, bending over the battlements of heaven, shall hail thy spiritual birth, and there shall be joy unspeakable in the realms of the blessed. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound ; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance."

"There is a balm for every grief,
A charm for every woe ;
It comes with swift and sure relief,
Its worth how well I know.
The cloud may rise, the storm may rage,
Their terrors I have proved,
But oh ! *that charm*, it never fails,
I know that I am loved !

Time on its ever-varying wing
Full many a burden bears,
And oft, alas ! its track is marked
With anguish and with tears :
Some cup of sorrow to be drained—
Some cherished joy removed,
But midst the ever-varying scene
I know that I am loved !

O Thou who formed each secret cord,
With skill beyond our ken,

To vibrate at a touch—a word
In all the hearts of men ;
The secret of my love to Thee
By time and change unmoved,
Its spring, its steadfastness, is this,
I know that I am loved !

For ever ! yea, for ever loved,
And evermore to be,
In ages past, in days to come
Throughout eternity !
All love that e'er deserved the name
From *this* blest Fountain flowed,
The centre of eternal joy,
I know that I am loved !

Jesus, ascended Lord, Thy life—
Thy death revealed a love
Whose *height* was yet unknown on earth,
Its *depth* unknown above.
Assurance ! Oh ! 'tis doubly sure,
By oath, by blood approved,
And God Himself has made it mine,
I know that I am loved !

Dear Fount of life—of hope—of bliss,
There is no love like Thine,
Yet each sweet stream that flows from Thee
Is like Thyself divine.
Oh may Thy saints with me proclaim
By Thine own Spirit moved,
Their *password this*, in life and death :
I know that I am loved ! ”

**“DRAW ME, WE WILL RUN AFTER
THEE.”**

SONG I. 4.

WHAT a comprehensive passage this is! Mark the connection between our running and Christ drawing. He must draw before we can run. All is of God. Man's will is nothing unless it be drawn. Man has a will, but it is not to be saved. “No man *can* come to Me except the Father which sent Me draw him.” And if ever his *will* is addressed in the Word of God, this “drawing” is always understood,—always in the background. If man comes, it is because he is drawn. Not a sinner, from the days of Adam to the present time, ever came in any other way. Is man, then, a mere automaton? No. “They shall be *made* willing in the day of My power.” The Spirit of God operates on man's will—constrains it, so that it yields. And so in the higher stages of the Divine life. All is of God's drawing power. All is of grace, and grace only. And what is the great drawing power here? Jesus. This is all the soul needs. It is the Spirit of God presenting Jesus, Jesus only, to

the soul. Then it runs. It never seems to go fast enough. The transcendent loveliness of His countenance has a power over the heart stronger than all the forces of morality or nature. Do we want to draw sinners?—lift up Jesus. Do we want to draw saints?—exalt Jesus. Do we want to give peace to the conscience?—present Jesus and His *finished* work. Do we want to comfort the weary and heavy laden?—oh, present Jesus to them! Do we want to cheer life's rugged pathway, lift the load from some burdened spirit, light up the dark valley into which some shrinking saint is about to enter? show them Jesus,—*show them Jesus*—Jesus only! For every state and every circumstance, for all times and all places, present Jesus. This is Heaven's panacea for every malady.

Mark again the individuality—"draw *me*." The coming to Jesus, the pressing after Jesus, the conformity to Jesus—all is *individual*. Ask not, with one of old, "What shall this man do?" but rather, "What am *I* doing?" "What is Christ to *me*?" Reader, affectionately and earnestly I ask, as your eye falls on these pages, is your inward heart secretly hungering, thirsting for Jesus? "What think *you* of Christ?" May God touch your conscience with this question, and enable you to look in His face with one of old and say, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; *Thou knowest* that I love Thee."

"We will *run* after Thee," not "walk." It is a *quicken*ed step, an *earnest* race. It is heart, hands, and head engaged in His service. Is is a "reaching forth," a "pressing" towards the mark. Oh, what will keep the soul thus moving onward, regardless of what the world says, what friends say, or what one's own heart would say? The eye fixed on Jesus. There is power. There is that which will keep everything under the feet. There is that which will make it "run;" run with alacrity, yet with Divine wisdom; run with zeal, yet with patience; run in the face of the world, the flesh, and the devil—and yet "more than conqueror" over all, "through Him that loved us."

And lastly, mark the single eye—"after *Thee*." What a heart-searching principle is involved here! How other motives come in in our Christian course! How much seems done for Christ, which, if it were sifted, would be found to be selfishness! How much is taken up and persevered in with a latent desire to stand well with the Church or the world! Oh, how little the eye is single in running the heavenward race! How films, or shadows, or clouds, dark and deep, come between the soul and Jesus! But let the Spirit of God draw me aside, search my motives and my conduct in the light of His countenance, then shall I see my own folly and weakness and sin, and learn to look more simply at Jesus. Then shall I cast this vile self behind, and with Him alone filling my vision, press onward

—"run with patience" yet with devotedness in His service. Then shall I run, for I shall be drawn, and Christ alone be the goal after which I am pressing. "After Thee!" Saviour, may this be the motto of writer and reader—the superscription over every act of life which all may read and understand! "After Thee!" for "whom have we in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that we desire in comparison of Thee." "After Thee!" for in that path is light, life, joy, and gladness,—yea, heaven itself. "Draw me," Saviour, and "we will run after Thee."

"All gone, all gone, for this life gone,
My days of health and strength;
Wearied and worthless, glad were I
To welcome home at length:
And yet, I'm happier far in truth
Than e'er I was in buoyant youth;
For, Jesus, Thou art *more* to me
Than health and strength and youth could be.

All gone, all gone, for this life gone,
Dear hopes most fondly nursed;
They glittered long around my path,
Till each bright bubble burst.
I wept; but oh! the blest despair
Has led me Heaven's own joys to share;
For, Jesus, Thou art *more* to me
Than Hope's fond dreams fulfilled could be.

All gone, all gone, for this life gone,
My soul's elastic spring;
Of vigour stript, I shrink aside
A crushed and useless thing:

24 *DRAW ME, WE WILL RUN AFTER THEE.*

Yet this is gain ; for thus I prove
Far more His patient, pitying love ;
And sweeter, safer this to me
Than self-reliant strength could be.

And going fast, while most are gone,
Loved friends of early days ;
The world grows stranger year by year :
I lose, but not replace.
'Tis well ! I'm cast the more on One ;
Stars scarce are missed while shines the Sun ;
And, Jesus, Thou art *more* to me
Than loved and loving hearts could be.

Dear Lord, I thankfully kiss the hand
That gently stripped me bare,
And laid me on Thy tender breast,
To lose my sorrow there :
'Twas anguish when earth's cup was spilled,
But now with Thee 'tis overfilled ;
For, Jesus, Thou art *more* to me
Than all earth's brimming cups could be.

What grace ! to show a soul so vile
Thy more than mother's care,
And lead through wreck of earth's poor joys
Thy joys with Thee to share.
What grace ! that Thou to such hast given
The foretaste now of feast in heaven ;
The foretaste even now to me,
More than a thousand worlds could be."

“THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST.”

PHIL. iii. 8.

ST. PAUL was in the position of a nobleman here. “Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee;” but all these things he “*counted* loss.” He brushed them all away. *Christ* was the one object which eclipsed everything he had before counted gain. He had put those things most precious to him side by side with Christ, and said, “Let all go; here, *in Christ*, is my choice.”

Can you, as St. Paul did, take the things you value most, and with true sincerity of heart, put them side by side with Christ, and *count them all loss*? This will determine whether you are a child of God or not. What place has Christ in your heart?

In the *past*, the *present*, and the *future* with St. Paul, it was all Christ. Can you say, as to the *past*, “*I counted* ;” as to the *present*, “*I count* ;” as to the *future*, “I press toward the mark.” Here is the power for making you happy, for making you an earnest worker for God. “What things were gain to me, these I *counted* loss for Christ; yea, doubt-

less, and I *count* all things but loss. I press toward the mark."

What is Christ to you now? Can you say, "I *still count*, as I did at first." Is Christ *to-day* as precious to you as when you first started on your Christian course? So many Christians who found Christ very precious to them *at first*, as time goes on, allow *other things* to come in, and Christ ceases to hold the place He once held. St. Paul says, "*I do count!*" Can you say, "To this day and hour *I count* all things loss for Him?" Everything depends on this—your happiness, your power for working for Christ, for walking with God. With many Christians it is not thus. Christ is at the bottom, and a fair outward life at the top, but *hundreds of other things between*. See that Christ is, in your heart and in your life, what He was at the first. Not only "I counted," but "I *do count*."

"For whom I have suffered the loss of all things." What have you suffered for Christ?—for your Christian testimony—your cleaving to, and living for Christ? The Lord makes up to us whatever we suffer for Him. He makes it up a thousandfold in the fulness of joy, the gladness, the peace, the calmness, the uplifting of soul.

Pressing to Christ; suffering for Christ; counting for Christ—these will be the channels through which God will pour into your soul such light and joy and gladness, such an uplifting power, that you will be able to run, to press, to reach forth. The

heart will go out more intensely than ever after Christ, for God will pour into your heart that which will make you more glad than you have ever been. Oh, prove God in this way! See what a flood of joy He can pour into your heart! Why are Christians not glad? Because Christ does not hold, and *continue to hold*, the right place in their hearts. Let Jesus hold that place which He is worthy to hold, and then you will be glad.

"I *press* toward the mark." So it is with the Christian. He *presses forward*. His temptations, and the things of the world, exert an influence to draw him back; yet, like the swimmer, he will sweep them all behind him, and every difficulty will be but as a force to move him on. He will press *through all* to Christ.

The end—to be *like* Christ. Lift up your head, Christian, your redemption draweth nigh! Only see that you are counting all things loss for Christ. See that you are suffering for Christ, pressing on to Christ. Then will you be found in Christ, and you will be *like Him*.

Onward! 'Tis the Captain's cry,
 Christian, dost thou dare to stand,
 Dare to rest while moments fly,
 Dare to linger, staff in hand?
 He who bought thee with His blood
 He who made Thy sins His own,
 Placed thee in the heavenward road
 Every barrier overthrown—
 Now He bids thee urge thy way
 Onward! to eternal day.

Heights within thy pathway lie,
Heights whose summits pierce the sky !
Many and oft a saint before thee
Who that mountain path hath trod,
Gathered there some beams of glory,
And while earth-bound, *walked with God.*
'Tis for thee to do as they,
Yet thou askest, Show the way !

As the parched and barren land
Craving for the genial shower,
Waits, impatient to expand
Bud and leaf in shrub and flower ;
When the genial showers descend
Hastes to drink their bounty in,
While the tender flowerets bend
And their fragrance widely fling :
Christian, so thy life must be,
Thou within a germ dost bear
Seeds of immortality.
'Twas the Spirit placed it there ;
He will make it spring and grow
Till to perfect stature risen ;
Then transplant it from below
To its Eden home in heaven.
Would'st thou seek that each day's sun
Find that hidden life expand,
Though it owe its grace alone
To the Heavenly Trainer's hand ?
Wouldst thou that each veil of night
Find thee farther on thy way,
Shining with a radiant light
More and more to perfect day ?
Then with childlike, trustful love
Lift the eye of faith above,
Where within the Temple gates
Jesus thy Forerunner waits.

Christian, dost thou truly know
'Tis for thee He waiteth there ?

Waits, to guide thy way below,
 Waits, to guard from every snare.
 There He stands, thy great High Priest
 With thy name upon His breast,
 Entered now within the veil
 Waiting at the mercy-seat.
 There thy cries must sure prevail,
 Plead His promise at His feet,
 And while bending humbly there,
 Plead the earnest fervent prayer—
 "Saviour, whose life, whose death was all for me,
 And Thine obedience mine,
 Oh suffer me to yield myself to Thee
 And make me wholly Thine.
 Grant me to lie within Thy arms of love,
 From self entirely free,
 To anchor to the glorious Hope above,
 To trust my *all* to Thee.
 I'd be the helpless clay—the Potter Thou—
 Oh mould me to Thy will,
 In joyous yielding let my spirit bow,
 And bid my soul be still.
 I tremble not, though tossed on life's rough sea,
 Nor heed the breakers' roar ;
 For every billow, guided, Lord, by Thee,
 But nears me to the shore,
 The further shore ! Oh joy, I've anchored there !
 Steadfast, and sure, and strong !
 And Thou wilt guide and guard and safely bear
 And bring me home ere long.
 Lord, 'tis enough, I am no more mine own,
 Saviour, *for ever Thine, and Thine alone.*"

Child of God, it is for thee,
 Helpless, sinful, weak, and frail,
 From that sinful self to flee
 Ground thy hopes within the veil.
 'Tis for thee in Christ to live,
 Nearer, closer, day by day,

THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST.

This it is alone can give
Strength for progress in the way.
In His strength then follow on,
Till thy travelling days are done,
Folded in His arms of grace
Till thou meet Him face to face.

S. M. W.

GOD'S MIGHTY POWER.

JOHN xii. 21.

It is a spiritual axiom, that nothing will win the soul but love; and Jesus is love embodied. It is only where the heart is thus drawn that there will be true obedience, and that obedience delightful. All obedience, all service, must be constraint, where the love of Christ is not the great motive. The heart knows of no sacrifice too great for the beloved One. Its joy is to lay down the most costly at its feet. It makes even drudgery delightful. Oh, if we want happy obedience to God's will, if we want the heart, the head, the hands, the feet, engaged in active service for the Lord, let Jesus be kept clear before the soul's view. No motive in earth or heaven so powerful as this. Nothing will break the bonds of sin so quickly asunder, nothing will burst the ties of the world, nothing will wean the soul so effectually from the shadows that are playing around it, as this. Commands will not draw, threatenings will not draw, promises will not draw; nothing will avail but a Saviour presented to the soul by the Spirit of God. As we "look unto Jesus," we may

"run with patience," but not otherwise. To begin with exhortations to obedience is beginning at the end. All service then is, at best, but duty or constraint. But let the Spirit of God only unveil to the soul the preciousness of Jesus, and how soon all is changed! What a transformation in the once sluggish, slow-paced heart! How every motive is elevated and purified! How alacrity is stamped on every faculty, and the soul seems to breathe a new element! What is the secret cause? A sight of Jesus. How vain it is to enforce commands or obedience without this! No wonder that no effort is made, no step taken. How can it be otherwise? The heart has seen nothing better than what it possesses to move it. It loves its own; and till it sees something better it will not, it cannot, relax its hold or change its course. Look at a child. See how it grasps its foolish toy. If you attempt to wrest it from it, it will only grasp it more tightly; yea, every energy will be strained as if it were about to lose its costliest blessing. What can be done? Reason with it? What folly! Wrest it from its grasp? You may do that, but its tears will only flow faster after the loss. What then? Hold up to its view another more attractive. How quickly the former is dropped, and how eagerly it extends its hand to the new prize! Man is but a child in grace. He must be treated as a child, or his soul will never be reached and won. Give up the world he will not. Set forward on the path of obedience

to God he will not. Expostulation is unavailing. But let the Spirit of God present to his view something better, something higher, nobler—even Jesus, “the chief among ten thousand,” “the altogether lovely,” and how quickly the world’s toys will drop from his grasp! How will the “things behind” be forgotten, and “the things before” be pressed forward to! What is the cause? A sight of Jesus. Nothing else. Hence the marvellous change. Hence the love and zeal and earnestness. The soul has come within the attraction of heaven’s Magnet, and cannot but follow. Cold service, tardy obedience, is the result of a cold heart; and this because Jesus is eclipsed. We need seek no other explanation.

I sought the Lord, and afterwards I knew
He moved my soul to Him who sought for me.
It was not I who found, O Saviour true—
No, I was found of Thee.

Thou didst reach forth Thy hand, and mine enfold,
I walked, and sank not in the storm-vexed sea;
But not so much that I on Thee took hold
As by Thy hold of me.

I find, I walk, I love; but ah! my whole
Of love is but an answer, Lord, to Thee.
Lord, Thou wert long beforehand with my soul,
Always Thou lovedst me.

ALONE WITH JESUS.

THE mountain and the desert—the two most lonely places on earth—were the constant resorts of our Blessed Lord. All His public work, all His active labours, were blended with them. It was seemly and befitting that the Lord of Creation should have the stillness of the desert and the solitude of the mountain-top as His closet.

In the loneliness of these places there was something very congenial to the mind of the Lord Jesus. Travelling in His own thoughts at a height to which none could approach, misunderstood by all, and sympathised with by few, He must have felt Himself alone. It belongs to everything that soars above the common level to undergo the penalty of loneliness; and He knew pre-eminently what it was. The desert has always been a great part of God's apportionment for His children. How thick and how many were these solitudes all around Canaan! How many of the pages of God's Word are devoted to these records of the desert! Moses spent forty years there. Elijah, John the Baptist, Paul, Philip,

all were led into the desert to learn lessons that could only be learned there. Israel's lifetime is filled up with records of the desert. All teach us how needful that our public life should be full of wilderness records. All life is superficial without it. All character lacks reality that has not much of such training. God provides solitude for us all; and for the same reason as He provided them for His people of old, to know Him, to know themselves, and to fit them for His service.

Reader, if you have not much of the desert experience, it will be greatly to the detriment and the peril of your soul. The more active, the more useful, the more earnest-minded the daily course, the more you need it. Nothing can compensate for solitude of soul with God. The character of the spiritual life depends upon the sanctuary. No one has ever been in the school of God of whom it could not have been written, as it was of the Master, "He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed." If we do not go into the sanctuary, God will send us there. Many a child of God, busy in the Master's work, has little of the spirit of the sanctuary in his own character. He works for God; but he himself has lost sadly the savour of Christ in his own person. God's workers must be witnesses. The witness must never be lost in the worker. Jesus must be seen in him—the only witness God will own and bless. If He be not seen in us, the sweet savour has gone. God will *send* us into the desert, or it may be into

the furnace, to walk there with the Son of God, with whom we have too surely, and perhaps too unconsciously, been parting company.

Yes, we need the hush of the desert, that the whispers of conscience may be loud. We need to stand daily on the margin of eternity, that there may be reality about us. Therefore the daily need of the desert. The Master's steps are the most distinct there. He gives us our vineyard from thence; and our valleys of Achor are doors of hope. Many a one who trembled as God led him down into the valley can bear his testimony, and say, "My happiest hours of life are there," "He maketh the wilderness a standing water," and "water-springs of the dry ground." Hidden converse with God; workers for God, see that it is daily maintained. Communion with God that will speak for God is inseparable from intense loneliness with God. Christ withdrew Himself: "He went up into a mountain apart to pray."

They to whom is given such communion cannot but bear the burden of the Lord in earthly things. Christ's cause and glory in the salvation of souls will oftentimes make their prayers with deep and inexhaustible desires. They may not seek such experiences. They do not come by common asking. They are given to them who are one with Christ, who have entered into such sympathy with God that they must needs bear His cross, and, as it were, be crucified for sinners. And, in like manner, God makes His servants to bear the burden of God's

cause on earth at large, so that, at times, the desires, the yearnings, and prayers for the prosperity of Zion will be almost more than flesh can bear; so that, in the expressive language of Scripture, they *travail in birth* for God's work on earth.

What a man is to God, that a man is. We may stand in many relationships—all, perhaps, very dear; but these must pass away, one by one, that you may be related only the more to *One*—the Lord Jesus Christ. Look well to it that you adjust daily your relation to Him. See that there are increasing communications between your soul and Him. The mark of the wilderness must be clearly upon us, and give its colouring to everything. If we “come up from it” each day, leaning upon our Beloved, our wilderness will be “as Eden,” and our “desert” as the “garden of the Lord.” And *that* mark none can mistake, however they may mistake other things. It will be the only living reality about us which will survive when all else perishes or has been forgotten. Worker for God, covet earnestly this best gift—and live in His presence.

Alone in the desert, yet Jesus is near,
And guideth me onwards, then how can I fear?
'Twas *He* in rich *mercy* thus led me apart
More closely and sweetly to speak to my heart.

Alone in the desert, what comfort is mine!
How brightly the words of His promise doth shine!
His love doth sustain me in sorrow's deep night,
Turning grief into gladness, and darkness to light.

Alone in the desert, no want can I know,
For the Rock that was smitten ne'er ceaseth to flow ;
Though supplies seem to fail me, I look up to Heaven,
And the wilderness manna still daily is given.

Alone in the desert, well may I rejoice,
Dear Lord, in *Thy presence*, Thy love, and Thy voice ;
I felt these were precious unto me before,
But now they're *sufficient*, I ask for no more.

Alone in the desert, yes here can I raise
My voice, though 'tis feeble, in accents of praise ;
This song shall go on though no echo it meet,
If but heard by my Saviour—to Him it is sweet.

Alone in the desert, it will not be long
Ere I join in the chorus of that blessed throng,
Who when gathered by Jesus, caught up to His throne,
Shall wander no more in the desert alone.

Alone in the desert, 'tis that I may bear
Fruit the Husbandman knoweth will ripen best there ;
And if this be His will, now in patience I'll stay
Till the shadows all flee at the breaking of day.

Then will He remove to His garden above
Each flower He hath planted and nourished in love,
Each one in perfection for ever to last,
For the storm, and the night, and the desert are past.

THE RESTING-PLACE.

PSALM cxvi. 7-9.

THESE words are for the people of the Lord, for those who are "saved;" and they have their parallel and explanation in John x. 9. The "saved" of the Lord "go in and out and find pasture," salvation and communion.

"Return" is ever the word for God's children. They have a resting-place, and they have only *one*. It is the Lord Jesus. In every other direction we behold a restless surging sea, here strewn with wrecks, there with angry billows. The quiet haven, the pillow for the weary soul, is only Jesus.

The Christian's tendency is to wander from this point. The cry of Heaven to him is daily and hourly, "Return!" Duties call him into the world. Life has claims upon him which must be met; but in each one there is a voice calling to him loudly, "Return!" It is the voice of God. It means, "Return for rest, for communion, for fresh strength for life's cares and duties, for that which can *alone* enable you to meet them." Without this continued "returning" of the soul you will be but half a

man in the midst of life's duties, and trials, and sorrows; and worse than all, you will be a *pauper* Christian.

And the motive for returning is supplied: "For the Lord hath dealt *bountifully* with thee." It is God's rich mercy, deep and unfathomable love, unchanging and unresting grace. In all this the Lord deals "bountifully"—passing words to express, passing tongue to tell, and passing thought to conceive. Yes, "O my soul," "*with thee*." Here is the wonder! "With *thee*," a sinner, a rebel, an outcast, a wanderer far from God, a worm of the dust—yet "with *thee*!" Oh wonder of wonders that nothing can ever explain, not even eternity, and that can be resolved only into the "love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

"*Thy* rest;" reader, is it so? Is Christ this to *thee*?

And the Psalmist resolves all this deep sense of God's "bountifulness" into three causes: "Thou hast delivered my *soul* from death, mine *eyes* from tears, my *feet* from falling." The order is instructive. The "soul" is first. Some people would put the "eyes from tears" first. They would like to be delivered from *sorrow*; but about the poor spiritually dead soul they think little or nothing. They would like to have the feet delivered from falling, to make no mistakes and get into no troubles in life. But the soul, and its state before God—ah, this is *nothing*! Everything is pushed into the

front before this. Here is the standing proof of man's perverted nature before God.

And lastly—the great *end* of all God's "bountiful" dealings—"I will *walk* before God in the land of the living." It is all given that we should walk "*before*" God. "Walk *before* me, and be thou perfect."

Christian, be ever "*returning*" to your rest. *Abide* in this "land of the living." "Walk before the Lord." While the many Christians around are anxiously shaping their course *before men*, be it yours to "walk before the Lord." The deepest bondage any Christian can be in is to be walking before men, courting the approval, catching the tone and spirit, and falling into the principles and ways of the world. Hence the spiritual life in so many is *dead*—*making themselves ready* to be "spued out of the Lord's mouth" when He shall come. Oh, be it yours to "walk *before the Lord* in the land of the living!" Here indeed will lie the cross to meet you; but here too is the *liberty*, the calm blessed peace of God, the holy joy of the Lord, the "crown of glory that fadeth not away."

This, this is rest, Lord Jesus,
Alone with Thee to be;
The desert is a gladsome place
With Thy blest company.
Oh! sweet to hear Thy tender voice,
Bidding me "come apart,"
Alluring me to its retreat,
And speaking to my heart.

THE RESTING-PLACE.

This, this is rest, Lord Jesus,
Alone with Thee to be ;
And when I sigh for fellowship,
To find it all in Thee.
Thy saints on earth—how dear they are,
Their love how passing sweet !
Yet would I leave them all to sit
Alone at Thy dear feet.

Such precious rest, Lord Jesus,
Alone with Thee to be ;
Thy secret words of love to hear,
Thy looks of love to see ;
To feel my hand tight-clasped in Thine,
To know Thee always near ;
A happy child *alone with Thee*,
My heart can nothing fear.

This, this is rest, Lord Jesus,
Alone with Thee to be ;
The desert is a happy spot
With Thy blest company.
Amid the throng I might forget
That I am all Thine own ;
I bless Thee for the "desert place,"
With Thee, dear Lord, alone.

“THE PEACE OF GOD.”

PHILIPPIANS iv. 7.

READER, what know *you* of this? Have you felt it in your soul? It is not the peace that flows from faith in the blood. It is the peace which the soul obtains from close and constant dealing with the living God—that which it experiences when it has been holding fellowship with its Heavenly Father, and has opened all its heart to Him. This is peace of its own peculiar kind. It is that which runs through the soul like an under-current; so still, and yet so deep; so real, and yet so inexpressible, that it lifts the soul above all passing scenes and circumstances. It preserves the heart from restlessness, and the mind from distraction and anxiety. It gives to the soul that superiority to the fretting circumstances of life which chafe the spirit so sorely and wear out its elasticity. It keeps the inner-man, in affections, thoughts, feelings, desires, fresh for God. It is a deep peace, so deep that it “passeth all understanding. The shock of the world and the things of the world

come upon it, but still it is "kept" in the midst of them. There is a deep under-current which lifts it above the tide of life's daily conflicts.

It is sad often to see the hearts and minds of Christians worried and distracted, tossed about with the heavings of life's troubled sea—no calmness of spirit, no superiority to the wear and tear of each hour. Where is the secret sheet-anchor, the deep peace, holding the soul fast to God? Never has there been a time when men were so running to and fro, when the events of each day and each year were so exciting, when one thing after another so rushed upon the soul like a flood, when there were more temptations to hurry and excitement, and fewer incitements to calmness and reflection. Oh, how much needed is this peace of God! How much the Church needs it! How much the believer! Nothing can impart it but communion with God. And without this no soul will ever be calm and happy in the midst of life's troubled sea. Beware of the tendency of the present exciting day. Beware of its secret influence over your soul. Move not among life's troubled scenes without this peace *daily* filling your soul. Get a fresh supply morning, noon, and night. Shut the world out, and close your doors about you, and speak often with your Heavenly Father. Emerging from this spot, you will meet life's daily trials and cares as a true disciple and soldier of the Lord Jesus. You will carry about you the stamp of Heaven, and

will leave behind a savour of His presence. He who has filled you with it, and whose intercession at the right hand of God sustains you in the midst of life's dangers and trials, will "keep your heart and mind," that no chafings or distractions of the day shall move you from Him.

When winds are raging o'er the upper ocean,
And billows wild contend with angry roar,
'Tis said, far down, beneath the wild commotion,
That peaceful stillness reigneth evermore.

Far, far beneath, the noise of tempests dieth,
And silver waves chime ever peacefully ;
And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,
Disturbs the Sabbath of the deeper sea.

So to the heart that knows Thy love, O Saviour,
There is a temple sacred evermore ;
And all the tumult of life's angry voices
Dies in hushed stillness at its peaceful door.

Far, far away, the roar of passion dieth,
And loving thoughts rise calm and peacefully ;
And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,
Disturbs the soul that dwells, O Lord, in Thee.

Why is the world so thirsty,
So restless, ill at ease,
So careworn with its pleasures,
So difficult to please ?
Because the truth it cannot see,
That all "Fresh Springs" must be in **THEE** !

THE PEACE OF GOD.

Why is Thy Church so weary,
Why does Thy cherished Bride
Appear so sad and lonely,
So far from "satisfied?"
What once she knew she fails to see,
That all her "Fresh Springs" are in **THEE**!

Why needs she so much urging
To work, and love, and feel?
Why craves she fresh excitement
To stimulate her zeal?
She cannot, or she will not, see
That all "Fresh Springs" must be in **THEE**.

Too true it is! On every side
We look in vain for Christ's true Bride!
We hardly recognise her now,
So faint the glory on her brow!
She lives an outside life,—not void
Of talents usefully employed,—
The tilted vessel everflows,
But day by day more empty grows;
Too seldom is it filled, with care,
By meditation and by prayer,
For Christ's own Bride—how strange to own!—
Is seldom with her Lord, alone!

Is it not strange? With what surprise
Must it be seen by Angel eyes!
But that my own deceitful heart
In all these scenes has borne a part,
The sad reality would seem
The groundless terror of a dream!

I should have thought that she would prize
The mute appeal of those kind eyes,
The incommunicable things
Which **JESUS CHRIST'S** own Presence brings,
The sight of the Incarnate Son,
Unseen, yet fondly gazed upon,
The speaking silence in Him found,
The wordless voice, "'Tis holy ground."

Yes, verily, I should have thought,
Unless by sad experience taught,
That such exceeding Tenderness,
Such all-surpassing Loveliness,
Once seen and tasted, had sufficed
To make her lose herself in Christ!

I should have thought that one so blest
Would never care to leave her nest,
Unless, on wings of love, to fly,
Led by the glances of His eye,
And, keeping Him in sight, fulfil
Some fresh expression of His Will:
Then, home returning at His call,
Come straight to Him, and tell Him all,
Confess her failures on His breast,
Give HIM the glory of the rest,
And then, with loving heart and true,
Ask what He next would have her do;
The passion of her heart fulfilled,
If all be done as HE hath willed:—
His thoughts, the standard of her own,
His Will, life's sweetest under-tone,
No work of love too great, or small,
To undertake at HIS dear call!

I should have thought the favoured Bride
Would cling for ever to His side,
And need no pressure of alarm
To make her lean upon His Arm;
No sudden or extreme distress
To prove His glorious Faithfulness;
Nor failure of all earthly things,
To drive her to the heavenly Springs.

I should have thought she would not care
For any joy HE did not share,
Nor any earthly object prize
If JESUS did not sympathise;
Nor let herself be "greatly moved"
By human blame if HE approved;

THE PEACE OF GOD.

Nor have a single plan apart
From Him, the Sovereign of her heart ;
But hang upon His every word,
And treasure up each accent heard,
Each tone of love, each—less than tone,
Each look of love that said, " Mine own ! "
And never, never turn away
From so much love, and coldly say,
" I have not time for Thee to-day ! "

O JESUS ! Wondrous, loving Lord !
Untired still ! Be Thou adored !
Thy patience with Thy fickle Bride
May well attract her to Thy side !
Oh that she may Thy whisper hear,
" Return ! return ! for I am near ! "
And ever henceforth taste and see
That all her Fresh Springs are in Thee !

*From " Fresh Springs,"
by the Author of the " Old, Old Story."*

THE WORD OF GOD.

ISAIAH lv. 10, 13.

MARK the *design* of God in giving us His Word—"that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater." "Bread to the *eater*"—thus Christ and His Word are to be *taken in* as food. "Seed to the *sower*"—thus Christ and His Word are to be *given out*. This is the double purpose in the gift of Christ and His Word. We are to take Him into our souls first of all. "I am the *bread* of life." "He that *eateth* Me, he shall live by Me." "Thy words were found and I did *eat* them." After we have thus taken in Christ ourselves, we are to make him known to others. "Cast thy bread upon the waters." If Jesus be indeed *your* bread, if you *are* living upon Him, then make Him known to others. You are the "*sower*;" the "*seed*" is Christ. Go sow this seed in some heart around you. But in order to do this, you yourself must be living on Christ. Only those who are living on Christ can speak for Christ. If, reader, your daily life be not a continued taking in of the Bread of Life to your own soul, you are no witness for Him to others, though you be a Christian.

Your life is a blank. You are living to yourself; and when the Lord comes, shame and confusion will cover your face. You feel that He has died for you, and that you are saved from wrath through Him. This perhaps is all that concerns you. His glory you have not deeply at heart. Go through the hours of the day, and ask yourself, In how many of them have I been anxious for my Saviour's glory? What cross have I taken up for Him? What pleasure denied for Him? What desire given up for Him? What hasty word or temper held in check for Him? What are you doing for Jesus in this way? Does each day see some secret conflict waged with the flesh for His sake? Are your besetting sins battled with? Are you struggling with some secret propensity, or habit, or inclination, in His strength and for His sake? What are you *doing* for Christ? What are you *suffering* for Christ? Again, let me remind you if there is no conflict *can* there be any real spiritual life? If there be no taking up of some daily cross for His sake, *can* there be *any* love to the Saviour, or any concern for His glory? Oh, see to it, reader, that while you have a *name* to live, you are not *dead*.

Secondly,—Observe in these words the natural fruit of the heart—"thorns and briers." Mark the fruit of the Spirit—the "fir-tree" and the "myrtle-tree." Which of these is thine? Unless a great change has passed over you, you are bearing fruit that must be burned. There may be much that is

beautiful in your natural character, much about you that even the Saviour, were He here, might say, as He did of one of old—"Jesus beholding him, loved him." But with all this you are "dead in sins," "having no hope, and without God in the world." Have you been convinced of sin? Have you in your soul any sense of your utter ruin? Is there within you any breathing after God, any longing for more likeness to Christ? Are you very little in your own eyes, and is Christ *very, very* precious to you? What say you to these questions, reader? The Lord expects an answer to them. I put them in His name to your heart this day. May God give you grace not to pass over them. May they lead you to thought; may thought lead you to prayer; may prayer lead you to Christ. Then will *you* also know what it is to "go out with joy and be led forth with peace."

Unconverted one, lover of pleasure more than lover of God, bringing forth only "thorns and briers," what shall I say to thee? I will speak no word of mine, but leave my Master's with thee. Oh, may God write it deeply on thine heart!—"That which beareth thorns and briers is *rejected*, and is *nigh unto cursing*; WHOSE END IS TO BE BURNED" (Heb. vi. 8).

Christ never asks of us such heavy labour
As leaves no time for resting at His feet;
The waiting attitude of expectation
He oft-times counts a service most complete.

He sometimes wants our *ear*—our rapt attention,
That He some sweetest secret may impart ;
'Tis always in the time of deepest stillness
That heart finds deepest fellowship with heart.

We sometimes wonder why our Lord doth place us
Within a sphere so narrow, so obscure,
That nothing we call work can find an entrance ;
There's only room to suffer—to endure !

Well, God loves patience ! Souls that dwell in stillness,
Doing the little things or resting quite,
May just as perfectly fulfil their mission,
Be just as useful in the Father's sight,

As they who grapple with some giant evil,
Clearing a path that every eye may see :
Our Saviour cares for cheerful acquiescence,
Rather than for a busy ministry.

And yet He does love service, where 'tis given
By grateful love that clothes itself in deed :
But work that's done beneath the scourge of duty
Be sure to such He gives but little heed.

Then seek to please Him, whatsoe'er He bids thee,
Whether to *do*, to suffer, or lie still :
'Twill matter little by what path He led us
If in it all we sought to do His will.

ANONYMOUS.

THE SAVIOUR'S CALL.

MARK iii. 13, 14.

"AND they came unto Him." Here is the evidence of our calling and election. We come because He calls. Let us not trouble ourselves with the doctrine of election. Let each one ask himself the question, "Have I come to Jesus?" If you have, reader, then Christ has *called* you, and you have *heard* that call. You are one of the elect, for you have come to Jesus. In order to answer the question, "Am I one of the elect?" *first* ask another, "Have I come to Jesus?" But if there are two questions in the matter of salvation, such is the perversity of the human heart, men are certain to ask the *wrong* one first. "Am I one of the elect?" is *not* the first question, reader. "Have I come?" ask that first. Your answer to *this* question will be the answer—the only answer—to the other. Oh, *have* you come to Jesus? *Have* you heard His call? *Are* you at His feet?

"And they came *unto Him*." All who hear His voice go "to Him." "My sheep hear My voice; I know them, and they follow Me." Take care,

dear reader, you make no mistake here. Take care it is to *Him* you go. There are many voices all around you. One calls to "Baptism." Another calls to the "Church." Another calls to the "Sacrament." *God's* call is to come first to Jesus. This is the voice of the Good Shepherd. Not that I would undervalue the others. Oh no. They are all ordinances of God. But Jesus first—"Jesus only." O reader! in the midst of the many strange voices on every side of you, see that you hear *God's* voice calling you to Jesus.

"And He ordained twelve that they should be *with Him*." Mark the important word here—"with Him." He called them "*unto Him*." For what purpose? That they should be "*with Him*." Christianity is not an isolated fact, accomplished eighteen hundred years ago on Mount Calvary, and ending there. No. It is a germinating seed, a living principle, the first step only to a great end, and that end *walking* with God. It did not *end* with saving the soul; it only *began* there. How often do we hear it spoken of as if its only design were to make us happy and to take us to heaven. True, this is its design, but much more than this. We were redeemed that we should walk with God. We were bought with His blood that we should be "with Him," that we should never leave His side, that we should have Him nearer to us than any earthly friend, however near or dear. We were redeemed that we should

be so near as to hear His whisper and speak to Him heart to heart. This was the end for which He chose the twelve; this is the end for which God chooses any man. Ah, many Christians seem to know Jesus very little? He is rather an abstraction than a living Person. He is known at best in some of the prominent displays of His grace, such as in His death and resurrection and ascension and in His miracles of healing. These are but the *outer court* of Christianity. We cannot know Jesus thus. We know much of principles, of doctrines, of creeds, of the landmarks of Divine truth. But what do we know of a living person, what of a beating heart, what of a tender bosom, what of a constantly realised companion, what of abiding nearness to One whose eye of love is never off us, whose heart of love is ever open to us, and out of the fulness of whose grace we are hourly drawing and feeling satisfied? This, only this, is to know Jesus. Why do we remain in the outer court? Why so little thirsting to be within the veil? Why are so many satisfied with having been "called *unto Him*," and care so little about being "*with Him*"? Ah! most of God's people are walking *at a distance*. They have forgotten *why* the Saviour called them—"that they should be *with Him*." Christian reader, this is the only tenure on which you hold the great blessings of redemption. You have no right to one of them except on this condition—that you *walk with God*. Oh, remember it, and live not *on* at a distance from Him. *Know*

your Saviour by living very near to Him, having close and constant dealing with Him. Know Him, not as an abstraction, the embodiment of everything holy and everything good. Know Him as a living Person, a constant Companion, an abiding Friend, a *very present* help. Only thus can any one *know* Him. Christian, be it yours to know Him thus. Then how unspeakably precious will He be to you! Oh *what* a Friend will you have found.

“Broken vows, unanswered prayer,
Vain endeavour, sad despair,
Weary working, useless toil,
Fruitless sowing in earth's soil,
Plans o'erturned, and wishes crossed,
Souls unsaved, and labour lost ;—
Such, O Lord, my lot must be,
If I work—APART FROM THEE.

Help, each step upon the way,
Strength, sufficient for the day,
All things easy in Thy might,
Work for Thee a felt delight,
Courage, patience, grace supplied,
ALL things needful—at Thy side—
Such my happy lot will be,
Working, dearest Lord, WITH THEE.”

THE PRAYER OF JABEZ.

I CHRON. iv. 10.

THIS prayer of Jabez comes, in the midst of the genealogies of the opening chapters of the First Book of Chronicles, like a ray of light shining in the midst of a cloudy and dark day. It is the prayer of a man of God. His mother called him Jabez, which means sorrowful; but he turned out "more honourable than his brethren." How often it is just where *we* write darkness and trouble and sorrow, God so overrules it, that it proves a blessing. Jabez was honourable, because he was a man of prayer. He "called on the God of Israel." This expression in the Old Testament corresponds with that in the New, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"—the Covenant God—God in Christ, the Author and Giver of every blessing.

"Oh that Thou would'st bless me indeed." A blessing *indeed* is that which *God* sends you. What God *permits* is very different from what He *gives*. When He *gives* it is sure to be a blessing. So whatever I have, may it come from Thee! What I have, may it be used for Thee. Whatever I am asking for, may it prove a blessing. It will be a

blessing if it make me humble, if it make Christ more precious, if it make me useful, if it make me more like Christ, if it make me live more to God. Lord bless *me*, first; *then* "enlarge my coast." "Oh that 'Thou would'st bless me indeed; bless me in my soul, bless me with more love to God, bless me with a holy life, bless me by making me a new creature in Christ Jesus."

Then, ask for whatever your *wants* may be—"Enlarge my coast."

"And that Thy hand may be with me"—to keep me and lead me in the right way, to make me a growing Christian, a shining light, to make me like Christ. Thy hand with me to keep me from evil that it may not injure me. We need the hand of God on us, and the presence of the Spirit to sustain us, and hold us every moment. "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." We want God to keep us, to be with us, to bless us, to fill our souls with light and life, peace and joy; to bring us into communion with Him, and to make us walk with Him. If you have God's presence with you, then you are all right. We are going through a world where we see many things that suggest evil thoughts, and what we need is to be so kept from the evil by which we are surrounded that it may not hurt us. If God keeps your soul evil will do you no harm. Oh, let this be your prayer: "Lord, keep me; keep my soul that it may not take in sin; keep my heart and spirit that

it may not be contaminated; do not let this evil world hurt me; keep me from its power and influence."

If you take this prayer and offer it up in all sincerity, God will answer you as He did Jabez. Keep Christ before you. It is Christ you must address; it is Christ you must honour, if your own soul would be blessed. We all have something we want, some more than others, only take care you make it *second*. Ask *first* for your own soul; *then* for your "coast." There is nothing too little for Him.

"That Thine hand may be with me," to show me which way to go, how to speak and how to act. O God, keep me from all the sights and sounds of wickedness around me, that they may not hurt my soul and drag me away from Thee!

We speak too much to friends. We all want more speaking to God. Speak to Him *now*. Be men and women of prayer. Never go from your bedroom in the morning, never lie down at night, no matter how late it is, without prayer. By all the value you set on your soul, talk to God; make this prayer *yours*: and it will be *your* experience—"God granted him his request."

"LIFE is thine, but not to trifle, or to idly fling away,
Let thy heart's inherent manhood turn from childhood's toys
and play;
God would have His heavenly music rolling grandly through
thy soul,
Uttered—not in broken fragments—but in one harmonious
whole.

Let the master-hand of JESUS sweep across the strings of life
Till it wakes Divine responses, softly soothing pain and strife.

"TIME is thine, but time is passing, like a streamlet in its flow,
Earth's mist-clouds are swiftly fleeting in the dawning's rosy
glow ;

Give thy precious store of moments to the service of thy Lord,
Let each hour tell of His mercies and the sweetness of His
word.

Speak ! while speech is thine, and pleading can win sinners
to His side,
Tell them of a Lord that loved them ; tell them of a Christ
that died.

"HAND AND HEART are thine to yield HIM ; linked in service,
joined in love,

Swift through all the mesh of labour willing heart and hand
will move ;

Feet must follow, daily walking in the path that He has
planned,

Faith can *trust* Him in the darkness, though it may not
understand.

Christ has trod the path so lately, that the warm heart-cheering
glow

Has not faded from the footsteps that we love to trace below.

"ALL IS THINE, but all to give Him, who has given all to
thee,

He has poured on thee His riches, love and mercy, sweet and
free,

Give Him, then, thy heart's best treasures, give Him all thy
earthly store,

And when all thou hast is given, long to give Him more and
more !

Win thou crowns, but win them only thy most gracious Lord
to greet,

Cast them down in sparkling splendour at His Royal Piercèd
Feet."

EVA TRAVERS POOLE.

“REST IN THE LORD.”

PSALM xxxvii. 7.

READER, have you found rest? Do you know what it is to be *perfectly satisfied*? There are two kinds of rest. Jesus said, “Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will *give* you rest,” rest from the burden of sin, which Jesus gives to all those who come to Him, who find salvation through faith in His blood.

But there is another and a more perfect rest—“Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall *find rest* unto your souls”—a rest from self, from all the doubts and fears which fill our minds: a rest *in Him*.

“*Come unto Me*” is the secret of the first rest; “*Learn of Me*” is the secret of the second rest.

As *sinners*, we need the first rest. In the midst of the world, fast bound in one or other of its mighty chains, perhaps pleasure, or excitement, or it may be *earthly affection*, yet we feel sometimes a thirst for something better, which nothing earthly can satisfy. Jesus knows we have this thirst, and

He yearns to quench it. "In that last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." And again, to the woman of Samaria: "Whosoever drinketh of this water"—the water drawn from the wells and broken fountains of this world—"shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And His last words, as if He could not close His message without once more pleading with us to come to Him: "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." And having come to Jesus and found salvation, then *learn* of Him. Having come, *come nearer*.

See the difference in our position as we seek the two rests! We go to Jesus for the first rest, weary and heavy laden, thirsty and unsatisfied; seeking Him more for what He can give us, than for Himself. We see Him taking the sin, the restlessness, the weary longings, all away, and giving us instead His robe of spotless righteousness, quenching the burning thirst with "the water of life," and giving us peace and rest. And we are safe then, because henceforth we belong to Him, because our life is "hid with Christ in God."

And then we seek for the second rest, no longer

as sinners, but as *children*, and "if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;" no longer as suppliants crying for mercy, but as those who claim their just inheritance. And just as He longed to give us that first rest, so does He yearn for us to enjoy the second. We have *come* to Him, but He would have us *come nearer*. Even as Joseph, that wonderful type of our Saviour, said to his brethren, "Come near unto me, I pray you;" and "he kissed his brethren, and wept upon them, and after that his brethren talked with him;"—so does Jesus say to us, "Come near unto Me;" so would He have us to feel His kiss on our foreheads, and "talk with Him."

And if you have found salvation in the blood of the Lamb, and have the first rest of which Christ speaks—how about the second rest? Just as Jesus longed to bring you to Himself when you were far off, to give you rest when you were weary and heavy laden, so does He long for you to come nearer, to *learn* of Him, and to *find rest* unto your souls.

Happiness does not always follow conversion. Though by believing in Jesus we are safe *for ever*, yet we want something more before we can have perfect peace and "joy in believing." He would have us "*learn of Him*," trust and draw near, and live closer to Him every day of our lives. Though *His*—yet His "desire is toward us" still, that we may walk with Him, and go with Him to His gates,

and eat of the pleasant fruits which He has laid up for His beloved.

He has made us for Himself, and till we find rest in *Him* we can never rest. But oh! when we *do* find His rest, how inexpressibly sweet and wonderful it is! None but those who have felt it can tell what it is to turn from all the wearying doubts and fears of their own hearts, and the restlessness of their outward life, to Jesus, to Him who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," to be perfectly satisfied.

Calm these tumultuous waters, O my God!
And hush them into rest,
Or let each surging billow, as it heaves,
But toss me to Thy breast.

I trust Thee, oh! I trust Thee—but I'm weak,
And tears unbidden start,
As, face to face with Thee, I find Thy will
Demands a broken heart.

Wounded, and lacerated to its core,
With every fibre rent,
And all its energy of buoyant life
Withered and well-nigh spent.

And this is *Love*! I own it, O my God!
Yet sometimes marvel much
That Love should sweep away its own best gifts
With such unsparing touch.

Sweep them away—and then expect the heart,
Robbed of its choicest store,
To give Thee all its wealth of confidence,
And praise Thee more and more.

'Twere a strange venture, Lord, for Love to make,
But that Thou knowest well
The vast resources of Thy mighty grace
And Thine own power to heal.

Yes, Thou ART "ABLE," and I lay me down
To trust and to endure ;
To kiss the Hand that either gives or takes,
Enriches or makes poor.

A pierced Hand ! I see the deep-set scar ;
It bled on Calvary's tree.
The Heart that deigns to ask for my poor love
Was broken once for me—

Broken beneath a crushing load of sin,
Laid on the Righteous One,
When hell's defeated legions heard the cry,
"Thy will, not mine, be done."

That will ! It meant salvation for the lost,
E'en at the price of blood ;
Anguish and ignominy, shame and death,
Borne by the Son of God.

All borne for me ; and shall my coward heart
Refuse its best to Thee ?
Lord Jesus, take me to Thy fellowship,
Whate'er the cost may be.

A fellowship of suffering—but no curse ;
That cup was drained by Thee—
A fellowship of resurrection joy
And life and liberty !

A blessed heritage of perfect peace,
A calm of quiet rest,
That stills each throbbing pulse of grief or pain
Upon the Shepherd's breast.

E

REST IN THE LORD.

Do all Thy will with me, my loving Lord,
And I am satisfied,
While nestling 'neath the shadow of Thy wing
Thy weary child may hide.

Weary with longings to behold Thy face,
But not with thorn-clad brow ;
The Head that once was bowed on Calvary's cross
Is crowned with glory now.

And I *shall* see Thee ! when the strife is o'er,
The latest victory won,
And praise Thee, that amid earth's changeable day
Thy will, not mine, was done.

ANONYMOUS.

***“THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR
STRENGTH.”***

NEHEMIAH viii. 10.

Do you know anything of joy unspeakable filling your soul as you sit down before the Lord Jesus and drink in His love—such a joy as you cannot describe, and with which others cannot intermeddle, which just flows in and takes possession of you as the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost? Some have said that we are not to concern ourselves about joy, but how differently does God's Word teach! “The joy of the Lord is your strength;” “Rejoice in the Lord alway;” “These things have I spoken unto you that your joy might be full;” “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” Such an experience is only enjoyed by those who have yielded themselves to God, and are trusting Him for the forth-putting of His power to work in them all the good pleasure of His goodness. Now, have you this experience? Some one says, “Alas, no! But I greatly long for it and desire it.” Well, have you yielded yourself entirely to God? “So far as I know I am keeping nothing back from Him, and I

try to abide in Him; but instead of succeeding as you have described, I am painfully conscious that my heart turns to a thousand things, and is only brought back to Jesus by an effort, just to wander away again from Him whom I love." You say that you "*try to abide*." Now let me just remind you that *trying to abide* is not abiding, any more than trying to believe is believing; and inasmuch as abiding in Him is the condition in which we get the blessing, you may here find the explanation of the lack in your experience. Instead of your "trying" there must be His "enabling," and the measure in which enabling-grace will be experienced by you will be "*according to your faith*." If, then, instead of your "trying to abide," there were substituted a full trust in Him to enable you to abide according to His promise, "I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me" (Jer. xxxii. 40), would not the result in your own experience be very different from what it is? Were an anxious soul to say to you, "I am trying to trust Him," I think I can hear you at once telling the anxious one that he is to cease trying and to *trust*. Now, abiding is obtained by continuing to trust Jesus, not for acceptance and pardon alone, but for the fulfilment of every promise; and when we thus abide in Him, Jesus delights to put forth His power in us and control our whole being. "*Trying*" is putting forth an effort in the little strength we fancy we have. "*Trusting*" is taking the place of

"the faint," who have "no might" and are "without strength," and, from out of that place, looking for the fulfilment in us of all that His Word has promised and His power able to perform. Trying is doing what we can; trusting is looking off unto Jesus, expecting Him to do *in* us, as He has already done *for* us, all that He has said. He has promised, "I will put My laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts." Are you trusting the Lord to do this for you moment by moment?

So also in the matter of "life more abundantly," or receiving Jesus to live in us and rule over us every moment. It is just when we are brought to acknowledge that we have no power to make ourselves holy or to do effective service that we cast ourselves in our helplessness at His feet, and trust Him to do in us and by us all that He has said He will do. Then we find that He puts forth His power in us so that we are kept through faith. Most of the conflict in the experience of Christians arises from their not ceasing from self and taking the place of "the faint," to whom "He gives power," and of those who "have no might," to whom "He increaseth strength."

Do we not live and act as if we had a little strength, which we ask Him to increase, and so help us? We find the help withheld, because He has "*all power*," and only puts it forth in us when we admit that we have *none*, the reason being that He will not divide His glory. If you are conscious

that your life is a life of unsuccessful struggle, search and see whether it is not *righteous self* trying to overcome *sinful self*. Those who "have believed *do enter into rest*." But you cannot enter in because of unbelief. Give up the old hopeless conflict, self against self, and follow Him who comes not to *help* either you or your adversary, but as "Captain of the Lord's host." The roots of sin are not taken away out of the heart, but the Captain of our Salvation keeps them under our feet. Regarding them we "have no might against this great company that cometh up against us." But looking unto Jesus, He delivers us from their power, and gives us a joyful experience of the promise fulfilled, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Conscious that we have *no* might in ourselves to keep us from being carried captive by it, we yet dare refuse to yield ourselves servants unto sin, for we know that Christ's power will be put forth according to His promise. He is ready not to crush the power of indwelling sin only, but "to bruise Satan" also beneath the feeble, helpless feet of those who trust only in the might of Jesus. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

"Why weepest thou?" Sweet word of consolation!
 Like a fond mother's kiss that soothes her child.
 Such was the Saviour's gentle salutation;
 Yea, and to me He speaks, in accents mild,
 "Why weepest thou?"

Why weepest thou ? So ask a thousand voices—
The birds, the brook that murmurs through the vale,
And while in newest robes the earth rejoices,
This is the whisper of the balmy gale—
Why weepest thou ?

Why weepest thou ?—not knowing who is tending,
His Eden, for with tears thine eyes are dim.
The Heavenly Gardener over thee is bending—
Each tender floweret is a care to Him.
Why weepest thou ?

Why weepest thou, and seeking canst not find Him ?
Have strangers come and borne away the Lord ?
Lo ! from the grave He breaks : bands cannot bind Him ;
Jesus is nigh ; to thee He speaks the word,
“ Why weepest thou ? ”

Why weepest thou, bowed down by persecution ?
Rather let them that hate thee be afraid.
The day is nigh, the day of retribution,—
To thee, and not to them, hath Jesus said,
“ Why weepest thou ? ”

Why weepest thou ? Thy way is dark before thee ;
But dost thou look for Jesus in thy grief ?
Soon shall His smile of love beam brightly o'er thee—
The dawn is nigh : thy woes shall find relief—
Why weepest thou ?

Why weepest thou for sins yet unforgiven,
And askest, Who shall roll the stone away ?
Canst thou not hear and trust that Voice from heaven
That tells thee all is done, and seems to say,
“ Why weepest thou ? ”

Why weepest thou ?—to yon turf hillock wending—
Because thou sayest 'tis there some loved one lies.
The dust alone is there. Through Christ's ascending
The God-breathed spirit hath joined its native skies.
Why weepest thou ?

72 *JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH.*

Why weepest thou—whose feet have vainly hasted—
Whose costly offerings seem an idle pain ?
Nay ; love bestowed on Jesus is not wasted ;
Thy early tribute was not brought in vain.
Why weepest thou ?

Why weepest thou, poor pilgrim, faint and weary ?
Yearning until the promised Bridegroom come !
Soon shalt thou pass beyond this desert dreary :
A welcome waits thee in thy Father's home.
Why weepest thou ?

Why weepest thou ? Listen, thou child of sorrow !
Be of good cheer ! Dispel thy groundless fears !
To-day let faith discern the bright to-morrow,
When those shall reap in joy that sow in tears :
Why weepest thou ?

Why weepest thou ? Saviour, Thy tender greeting
Is as a healing balm for every wound,
I seem to hear the heavenly host repeating
This word of Thine, while all their harps resound :
Why weepest thou ?

ANONYMOUS.

"PRAISE YE THE LORD."

PSALM cxlvii. 1.

CHRISTIAN, fix your eye upon Christ and you will soon praise Him. Dwell upon that Lamb of God till you forget yourself and become lost in the marvellous love to you, a guilty sinner. Read the meaning of those drops of blood, of that anguished look and that bitter cry. It was all for thee. It was because He was suffering for thy sin, and that thou mightest go up to the throne of God a blood-bought, pardoned sinner! Dwell on this love till self is forgotten and praises fill thy soul.

But it is *not every one that can sing!* Can THE UNSAVED sing? In this present day one of the devil's snares—and the devil is going about, not so much as a raging lion as like a subtle serpent, "deceiving the whole world," and all the more because his time is so short—is music. Everything is music! And they think HEAVEN is simply a place of MUSIC! Are you among those who like to hear about the songs of heaven, but who do not care to hear of the song that a soul sings when it gets its feet on the rock? Take care lest you be among the unsaved. What does Paul say? "Make melody."

But how? "In your hearts." And that is not all. He says, "with grace"—singing *with grace in your heart* to the Lord. You cannot sing the Lord's song till you have grace in your heart, till you have the discovery of the free love of God to sinners through His Son. Have you got that? If you continue as you are you cannot join the song of the redeemed to the Lamb, because you have never counted Him worthy of your heart. If you love your music so well, but love the Lamb so little, instead of joining in that song when the great multitude shall appear with Christ our Head, raising their voices loud as many waters and as mighty thunderings, you will just hear it *at a distance* for a moment or two, and then go down into the outer darkness, where there is weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth—ceaseless weeping, eternal wailing, everlasting gnashing of teeth at your own folly in having missed the day of your opportunity. Do not be deceived by the delight of singing, as if, because you could sing a pleasant hymn, therefore you were one that could sing the new song.

O Thou! to whom my soul aspires,
The object of her best desires;
The Saviour, who redeemed that soul,
The healer, who hath made me whole;
My advocate, whose plea prevails,
Whose intercession never fails;
O Jesus! Listen to my plea—
Increase, O Lord, my love to Thee.
I blush for shame when I reflect
What love Thou justly might'st expect—

Thou who *for me* hast lived and died,
Been mocked, and scourged, and crucified.
Yet, though *for me* Thy life-blood flowed,
Cold is my heart towards Thee, my God—
What claims to love like Thine can be?
Increase, O Lord, my love to Thee.

This life, with all its petty things,
The thoughts, the cares, each moment brings,
Its tempting sweets, its busy schemes,
Its toils, its visionary dreams—
These chain to earth that dear-bought soul,
I long to yield to Thy control ;
Oh break my shackles—set me free,
Increase, O Lord, my love to Thee.

There is a pure, intense delight
In loving *Thee*, though veiled from sight,
Far, far above all sweetness felt
In earthly love—its flame can melt
The obdurate heart, with power divine,
And cure the love of self and sin :
Jesus ! consume them both in me—
Increase, increase my love to Thee.

Oh if I loved Thee as I ought,
Wouldst Thou not blend with every thought?
Would hours, nay, even days be spent
Without one longing heavenward sent?
Without one fervent wish to dwell
With Thee in bliss ineffable?
Why should it e'er be thus with me?
Increase, O Lord, my love to Thee.

Spirit of glory and of God !
Shed in my heart Christ's love abroad—
Cast every meaner object out—
Chase every unbelieving doubt—
Make clear His precious love divine,
To kindle and to deepen mine ;
Jesus, Thine only would I be,
Increase, O Lord, my love to Thee.

ANONYMOUS.

“ABIDE IN MY LOVE.”

JOHN xv. 10.

“If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.” The “keeping” is not only the proof of our love, but the measure of His: I mean of His manifestation of it; for the question here is of communion, not of salvation. If we are walking carelessly, allowing sin to have “dominion,” our sense of the love of Christ, as practically near and sweet, will be lost. Abiding in His love is linked with doing His will. He loves us unconditionally, but He can only, as it were, *express* His love conditionally—“He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, *and will manifest Myself unto him.*”

He shows us, too, how these same conditions were true for Himself as man—“Even as I have kept My Father’s commandments,” &c. For Him also there was the “learning obedience”—the bringing His human will into subjection. But

He could say, "I do always those things which please Him;" and, therefore, He "abode in" the Father's love. It was His home, from which He could not be for one moment shut out. Is not this the secret of our knowing so little of the joy of Christ's love? We are keeping *our own* commandments. We are serving self instead of yielding it. We are not "submitting ourselves wholly to His holy will and pleasure," to have every bit of our lives moulded by it. We want to have faith, without surrender. We are ready to be acted upon by a succession of good impulses, but not to act ourselves in self-denial and mortification. We are not willing to be judged by the Word of God, *and that* only. We would rather look into the lives of our fellow-Christians for some help in modifying its standard. We may, perhaps, *do* the commandment of our Lord (very fitfully even that), but we certainly do not "keep it"—and keeping is something beyond doing. A thing done may be done with, but a thing kept is continually present—a hidden force, whose energy is always at work. And without this there will be many a break in our communion with Christ. We shall not "abide" in His love, but only now and then enter it, coming into warmth and nearness out of distance and cold, to which we too soon return.

And to abide in His love we have need to lay to our hearts God's own solemn question, "What communion hath light with darkness?" "Oh,

but," we say, "that does not apply to the present state of society." But light and darkness are the same in every state of society—more or less intermingled, more or less sharply defined—but as entirely opposite as ever. It is the fashion now-a-days to smooth over differences, but the differences remain. "What communion," God Himself asks it, "hath light with darkness?" In our heart's silence the words ring on still—*What communion?* And we know there is none.

If we complain, as we often sorrowfully do, that we are not growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus, is it not because—because? Conscience tells clearly enough the reason, if we will let it speak. We have not been sufficiently sensitive to the infection of an unhealthy atmosphere. We have not shrunk from any that was not warmed and purified by the Sun of Righteousness. What marvel if growth is slow?

Can we say that the words do not reach to our own everyday guidance? If we cannot (or we must needs go out of the world) refuse all courteous intercourse with those who are not one with us in the faith of Christ, are we as careful, even as we might be, in avoiding needless contact with them? Is our association always *necessary*, never from *choice*? Do we feel the loneliness and trial of such intercourse?—or are we not very well content to enjoy it? Would it not be rather a cross to give it up than to continue it?"

When the concourse of the worldly throng goes sweeping on
its way,
All enveloped, all encumbered, with the busy hours of day,
Do we hear the voice beside us pleading tenderly and low,
"Come and rest a while with Jesus, rest with One who loves
you so?"

In the voiceless calm of evening, when the shadows fall around,
Do we hear along the sighing breeze the oft-repeated sound?
Oh! hark! the voice of Jesus! 'tis thy Saviour calling thee!
"I am waiting, O my loved one! come and rest a while with
Me!"

When the glimm'ring "stars of twilight" fast are fading in the
dawn,
To herald in, to welcome in, the smiling of the morn,
Do we rise to welcome Jesus ere the hours of toil begin,
Just to leave with Him our sorrows and the burden of our
sin?

Are we list'ning, *ever* list'ning, to the echoes of His love,
That are ringing, *ever* ringing, from the "mansions" there
above?
Are we living on His friendship, are we leaning on His breast,
Trusting *ever* in His promise, "Come, and I will give you
rest?"

When the broken heart is tolling out its melancholy chime,
But reflecting all too clearly the vicissitudes of time,
All the while a loving voice is softly whispering to thee,
"Come and tell it *all* to Jesus, come and rest a while with
Me!"

See the loving smile of Jesus, see the angels looking on,
While they listen to the pleadings of the heart that He has
won;
As we walk away with Jesus, all the borderland along,
We can catch the "Hallelujahs" of their everlasting song.

G. J. J. WHITFIELD.

"THE LITTLE FOXES."

CANTICLES ii. 15.

REAL spiritual danger and true privilege ever run alongside of each other. If we search the Word we shall find that when the Lord's people have made some slip in their path, it has invariably been after some great spiritual privilege and enjoyment. Abraham, Moses, Elijah, and David are all instances of this. At such seasons the child of God is more likely to be off his guard. These Satan watches, and trips up the incautious Christian. Never do we need the warning "watch and pray" more than at such a moment, for when is it that the foxes make their appearance among the vines? Not in the dreariness and desolation of winter, when the vine-tree is stripped of its foliage and apparently a lifeless stem. No; but in summer, when the foliage of the vine-tree is thick and beautiful, when the vines begin to bear, and when all around betokens summer fruitfulness. Then do the foxes, yea, the little foxes, move stealthily among the rich foliage, inserting their teeth in the bark of the vine stock, and cast a withering blight over the once beautiful tree.

Christian, learn the instructive lesson. It is when thy soul is enjoying secret communion with the Saviour that "the vines have tender grapes." What a tender, sensitive plant is the Spirit of God within thee. What a little thing, like the "little fox," will draw a veil between thee and Jesus. What a little thing will draw over thy soul a cloud, a vapour, or a film, shading the brightness of His countenance, and making the heart droop with sadness. A thought, an imagination, a look, a word, a temper, an act not *altogether* straightforward—oh, these "little foxes," how they spoil the vines, how they blight the tender grapes. Watch, Christian, watch! Be on thy guard. Distrust thyself, and lean more on Jesus. There, only there, wilt thou be safe. Only there wilt thou be strong. Keep close to thy Saviour at all times and in all places; so shall it be well with thy soul.

And if darkness or clouds, films or shadows, come between thee and thy Saviour, haste to the blood. Let not delay beget forgetfulness, and sin secrete itself in the soul. Let nothing harbour or fester in the dark. It is thus that spiritual sensitiveness begins to decline. Tenderness of conscience gives way. Then comes alienation, till, little by little, there is left behind in the soul an earthliness, a deadness, a blank. We have less shrinking from what is contrary to God's Spirit than we once had. Communion with God begins to lose its former freshness and sweetness. Some things, *worldly*,

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though not perhaps *sinful*, begin to have attractions for us they formerly had not. Then we go on to little compliances, little concessions which we once could not have made. The line which once separated us from the world becomes less broad, and clear, and distinct than it used to be. And so we go on, little by little, till we find ourselves at a distance from God, and carried down the stream of the world. Oh, watch, *watch* ! Keep near to Jesus ! So shall all go well with thy soul.

How is the Master grieved ?

By worldly, godless days,
Empty of prayer and praise ;
By passion or by strife,
Deceit in heart or life,
By envy or by pride,
By thoughts dissatisfied :
By malice laid within,
By every kind of sin,

Thus is the Master grieved—Lord, I would pray
I may not grieve Thee thus, this coming day.

How is the Master pleased ?

By holy, godly days,
Filled up with prayer and praise ;
By patience mid the strife,
By truth in heart and life ;
By keeping at His side,
Humble and satisfied ;
By purest love within,
By hating every sin,

Thus is the Master pleased—Lord, I would pray
That I may please Thee thus, this coming day.

This wondrous life of mine
Thou gavest me :
In every step of it
What love I see !
Constant, compassionating care,
Thy love, my Heavenly Father, there.

Each step has not been smooth ;
Trials have lent
Their gloom and shadows deep ;
But all were sent
To bring me nearer, Lord, to Thee—
Thy tenderness in all the way I see.

And now at Thy dear feet
Once more I fall,
To give Thee, Lord, my life—
Yes,—take it *all* !
It has been Thine for many a year—
Yet not, my Father, wholly Thine, I fear.

The world, its cares and joys,
Within my heart
Have had too dear a home,
Too large a part ;
But now let nothing have a share—
Create Thyself a perfect temple there !

O Jesus ! let Thy life
In my life live ;—
A consecrated heart,
My Master give !
In life, in death, let this my glory be :
I am my Lord's for all eternity !

ANONYMOUS

**"HE THAT TILLETH HIS LAND SHALL
HAVE PLENTY OF BREAD."**

PROVERBS xxviii. 19.

THERE is a very close and striking analogy between earthly and heavenly things. All the things in this world in every department of it were intended to be pictures of heavenly things. Everything in nature is the shadow thrown up on the surface of great spiritual realities. Every tree you look upon has *behind* it another tree of which it is only the shadow, viz., the Tree of Life. Every rock beneath your feet is only the shadow of a greater behind—the Rock of Ages. Every ray of sunlight which fills with gladness is only the shadow of the smile of God which lights up the soul with joy. Look through the Gospels and you will find this was the view our blessed Lord took of everything around. He saw the reality behind the shadow, and was constantly lifting up the natural to the spiritual. Under His touch the commonest objects of nature were transfigured and reflected a glory they never had before.

It is in this light we must view the language of

the Old Testament. Let me illustrate my meaning by a few thoughts on the passage at the head of this paper.

What is the "land"? It is the most valuable worldly possession a man has. It is property. Spiritually it is Christ, and all our privileges in Him. Before a man can do anything to land—plough it, sow it, or anything else, he must *have* it—it must be *his own*. Before a man can "*grow up* into Christ" he must be *in* Christ. Christ must be *his*. He must *possess* Him as *his own* Saviour. Reader, is Christ yours? Have you received Him into your heart as *your* Saviour? Can you say "Christ is *mine* and I am His"? Is Jesus precious to you? Is "*the Lord*" yours?

If so, are you *tilling* it? In that *field* of great spiritual blessings which is yours, are you gathering out the stones—all that would hinder your growth in grace, and your testimony for Christ in the world? Is the plough of God's Holy Spirit, through the Word, going down to the depths of your heart, and daily ways, and thoughts, and words, and works—searching your whole life through and through, and bringing you more and more into entire subjection to the mind of Christ? Are you *fencing* yourself off from the influences of the world around you, all the principles of which are injurious to the life of God in your soul? Are the *seeds* of love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, being sown in your daily walk? Are you "*tilling your land*"?

If so, then indeed you shall have "plenty of bread." Your soul will eat and *enjoy* Christ the Bread of Life. You shall eat, yea "eat abundantly," of the fruits of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. You shall eat the bread of delight in God and God's Word. Communion with God will be a reality—a blessed reality.

But if you are *not* "tilling your land," if you are one of those who are satisfied because you are "just saved," sitting down, doing nothing for Christ, nothing to win souls for Him, nothing to make Him a sweet savour to others by your holy Christ-like life—then indeed you will have *no* bread. Your soul will *starve*. It will happen in your soul as happens in an *untilled* field—weeds will grow up, and thorns, which will eventually become the home of the adder and the serpent. If you are not tilling your soul there will soon spring up the weeds of spiritual darkness within you, loss of peace with God, no assurance of being saved, a darkness hanging over you, an inward deadness, the salt with its savour lost and only fit to be trodden under foot of men. Ah, these are the weeds that are thick in the hearts of many a *Christian* man and woman around! No wonder! It is God's judgment on the "*untilled* land." The law of nature is the law of grace. Neglect of *tillage*? then weeds—spiritual misery, despair and death!

O Christian! I warn you, if this is your case go

not on in it. You are on the verge of a precipice, every moment of which is increasing the distance between God and your soul, between you and heaven. The end, if it be not the loss of your soul, will be shame and confusion which will cover your face when the Lord shall send for you! Oh, come back, come back. "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead." "What meanest thou, O sleeper: arise, and call upon thy God."

The hours of rest are over,
The hours of toil begin;
The stars above have faded,
The moon has ceased to shine:
The earth puts on her beauty,
Beneath the sun's bright ray,
And I must rise to labour:
What is my work To-day?

To search for truth and wisdom,
To live to Christ alone,
To run my race unburdened—
The goal my father's throne:
To view by faith the promise,
While earthly hopes decay,
To serve the Lord with gladness,
This is my work To-day.

To shun the world's allurements,
To bear my cross therein,
To turn from all temptation,
To conquer ev'ry sin:
To linger calm and patient,
Where duty bids me stay,
To go where God may lead me,
This is my work To-day.

To keep my truth unshaken,
Tho' others may deceive,
To give with willing pleasure,
Or still with joy receive :
To bring the mourner comfort,
To wipe sad tears away,
To help the timid doubter,
This is my work To-day.

To bear another's weakness,
To sooth another's pain,
To cheer the heart repentant,
Or to forgive again :
To commune with the thoughtful,
To guide the young and gay,
To profit all in season—
This is my work To-day.

To think not of to-morrow,
Its trials or its talk,
But, still, with childlike spirit,
For present mercies ask :
With each returning morning,
I cast old things away ;
Life's journey lies before me,
My prayer is for *To-day*.

ANONYMOUS.

SIN.

I TIMOTHY v. 24, 25.

"BEWARE of sin of all kinds. Sensuality, excess of meat or drink, deadens the soul, makes it, like the body, heavy and drowsy. It shuts out Jesus from your view." "Beware of anger, envy, pride, sloth, a want of love, a peevish tone, an evil eye, an unguarded thought. Beware of inconsistency, of indifference to anything that concerns your precious Saviour. Such things deaden the heart, and raise grave doubts within as to whether He can love such as you. Doubts bring on fears, and fears estrangements. Beware of empty, unworthy, frivolous trifling; of ease, luxury, self-indulgence, and acquiescence in the received maxims of the world. Above all, beware of your own heart. We often see the most promising characters slowly falling off. For a time there is a kind of negative declension. No marked or striking sins appear; but nothing is advancing towards the likeness of Jesus. They seem for a while to stand still. Then they slowly fall. Perhaps some one sin, long nourished in *secret*, openly appears. This one sin gives the fatal wound

to their spiritual life." It does not come alone. Soon its train appears, until at length there is nothing outwardly to distinguish you from the inconsistent, ungodly, professing Christian world. The spiritual life is dead. A veil hangs between you and the Saviour. Oh, sad state to fall into! Yet it is very easy. Let us only lose sight of Jesus; let us only be less watchful over sin, and self, and the world, and we are soon in the gulf in which thousands of unhappy spirits are struggling. Christian reader, "Watch and pray," lest you fall into temptation. Look to Jesus and "watch." Look to Jesus and "pray." Look to Jesus and "live."

"It is evident that the most powerful intellects of those who live in sin or spiritual sloth are mysteriously limited in the perceptions of truth. They seem to dwell in the outer court. The characters traced on the veil they read with a perfect skill, but the ideas *behind* they do not apprehend. With a perfect state of the organs of sight the original power of perception is limited. On the other hand, have we not often seen men of no intellectual power, yet possessing such gifts of wisdom and knowledge, such ripe and fruitful apprehensions of Divine truth, as the most cultivated intellect has never attained to? No one can observe the mind of unlearned Christians without perceiving a proverbial wisdom, a sort of axiomatic knowledge of truth, an originality of thought, a refinement and

delicacy of discrimination, which can be accounted for by no external teaching. They have overflowed with an inward light, as if their powers of spiritual perception, like the gifted vision of the sightless, had no horizon. What is this but the enlightenment of God's Holy Spirit through the channel of prayer and God's Word. There is no fact more certain and proved by observation, than that the greatest teachers of mankind have learned more truth on their bended knees than from all the books of science or in all the schools of philosophy. The way to all true greatness of character lies through the channels of God's Spirit, God's Word, and prayer. The most inferior intellects become susceptible of powers which make men honourable among men."

Sinner, I have a word for you. The sins of a lifetime are upon your soul, following you with slow but certain footsteps to the bar of God. They do not trouble you. Your conscience is not burdened. You have forgotten them. You are insensible. This is your terrible state. "Some men's sins are *open beforehand*, going before to judgment; but some *they follow after*." Yes, unconverted reader, "they follow after." Clasp your formal religion, your lifeless creed, your innate self-righteousness more closely to your heart if you will; but remember your past life, its dark catalogue of forgotten sins; remember "they follow after," a long dark shadow, sure of foot, unwashed in the blood of Jesus! What

if at your passing hour you wake up under a flood of eternal light, and see them in array before you? You can make this mistake but once. Anticipate a shadow of the confusion which must one day cover your face when all that is now hidden shall come to light. Deceive not yourself: "*they follow after*;" stealthily, surely, like shadows, turning where you turn, dwelling where you abide, mysterious, inseparable. Oh, that a word of mine could arrest you, make you hasten to Jesus, to His precious blood for cleansing, pardon, peace! Unconverted reader, may the Spirit of God open your eyes! Only He can.

The chains that have bound me are flung to the wind,
By the mercy of God the poor slave is set free;
And the strong grace of Heaven breathes fresh o'er the mind
Like the bright winds of summer that gladden the sea.

There was nought in God's world half so dark or so vile
As the sin and the bondage that fettered my soul;
There was nought half so base as the malice and guile
Of my own sordid passions, or Satan's control.

For years I have borne about hell in my breast;
When I thought of my God it was nothing but gloom;
Day brought me no pleasure, night gave me no rest,
There was still the grim shadow of horrible doom.

It seemed as if nothing less likely could be
Than that light should break in on a dungeon so deep;
To create a new world were less hard than to free
The slave from his bondage, the soul from its sleep.

But the word had gone forth, and said, Let there be light,
And it flashed through my soul like a sharp passing smart;
One look to my Saviour, and all the dark night,
Like a dream scarce remembered, was gone from my heart.

I cried out for mercy, and fell on my knees,
And confessed, while my heart with keen sorrow was wrung ;
'Twas the labour of minutes, and years of disease
Fell as fast from my soul as the words from my tongue.

And now, blest be God and the sweet Lord who died !
No deer on the mountain, no bird in the sky,
No bright wave that leaps on the dark bounding tide,
Is a creature so free or so happy as I.

All hail, then, all hail, to the dear Precious Blood,
That hath worked these sweet wonders of mercy in me ;
May each day countless numbers throng down to its flood,
And God have His glory, and sinners go free.

FABER.

SERVICE, SEPARATION, CONSECRATION.

FIRST, as to service. Nothing in our service for Christ will fill the void which a loss of communion with God brings with it. To sit at His feet, hear His voice, and learn more and more of the depths of His loving heart, till our own goes out in sweet response, must ever be the highest privilege of the saint of God. And wonderful as it seems, the blessed Lord values this love of ours, and it must grieve His heart when He sees the least lukewarmness on our part with regard to it. He will not allow our work to take the place that belongs of right to Him. Where He finds it to be so, He often puts us aside from work, to teach us that, after all, our doings are at best, like our righteousness, but filthy rags, never to come between us and our Lord.

Secondly, as to separation and strangership. How much of our daily life is lived in God's presence? There is not one of us that would not be obliged to confess to God, if He inquired of us, that this world is not uncongenial to us, as it ought to be. We do not suffer from the uncongenial nature of the atmosphere, as a plant out of its true

sphere. Alas, we have become acclimatised! We have lived so much in the spirit of the things around us that we have become hardened. Is not this the real and true state of the case? We can face this world now, because we have been under its frosts and winters so much, that we have settled down—are we not settled? are we not *dwellers* on earth rather than *visitors*? The Lord make us rather *visitors* here, by making us *dwellers* there! I fear this is where most of us are. But, is not this the purpose of God, that we should so *dwell* there, that we should be only *visitors* here, and that we should *visit* here in all the grace, blessedness, meekness, strength, and power of Christ?

You know well what the separateness of Christ was. Look at His path as a man down here in this world of sin and sorrow. Look at that beautiful, wonderful, isolated, separated pathway through this world. Trace it from the manger, where He was ignominiously laid at His birth, because “there was no room for Him in the inn,” down to the cross. Look at the separateness of it, the holiness of it! Mark what He says—“As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world.” Think of that! Blessed God, is it true that I am not only united to the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, but I have as distinct a mission on this earth as He had from Thee! Oh, it is wonderful! It is in this question of Nazariteship that we are feeble. I believe *that* is the point of our departure;

there is not this distinctness, there is not this divine, thorough, comple separateness to God.

And lastly—Consecration. Many Christians when they come to die, put everything very definitely into His hands. They commit to Him very fully their souls' salvation. They give into His care their bodies to be guarded in the dust, and "raised up again at the last day" (John vi. 39, 44). They hand over to Him all their affairs, the charge of their families, their spheres of work, their businesses—simply everything; and they do so in simple and childlike confidence, knowing that He is more than equal to the charge.

But why should we wait for death to teach us this lesson of entire confidence in Him? We should in life commit all just as definitely and confidently to His care and keeping, thus "living unto the Lord" as really as "dying unto the Lord." Every question as to what should be done or left undone is to be settled not according to the Christian's own individual likes or dislikes, but "*unto the Lord.*" He is to act in every matter, from the greatest to the least, as far as he is able to "understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. v. 17), in accordance with it, remembering the "account of himself to God" which "every one of us" must eventually give (Rom. xiv. 12). He will try to *anticipate* as far as possible the judgment which Christ will then pass upon "the things done in the body" (2 Cor. v. 10). Reader, watch your communion with God.

Failure in that will leave you worldly-minded, and thus render consecration to God impossible.

There's not a grief, however light,
Too light for sympathy !
There's not a care, however slight,
Too slight to bring to thee !

Thou, who hast trod the thorny road,
Wilt share each small distress :
For He who bore the greater load,
Will not refuse the less.

There's not a secret sigh we breathe,
But meets the ear Divine ;
And every cross grows light, beneath
The shadow, Lord, of Thine.

Life's woes without,—sin's strife within,
The heart would overflow ;
But for that love which died for sin,—
That love which wept with woe.

All human sympathy but cheers,
When it is learned from Thee.
Alas for grief !—but for *those tears*
Which fell at Bethany !

ANONYMOUS.

O Saviour ! I have nought to plead
In earth beneath, or heaven above
But just my own exceeding need,
And Thy exceeding love.

The need will soon be passed and gone,
Exceeding great—but quickly o'er,
The love unbought is all Thy own,
And lasts for evermore !

G

WALKING, WORKING, GROWING.

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."—COL. I. 10.

ST. PAUL is speaking of that which pertains to ourselves—our walk. The walk is made up of short steps. So we are called on to walk worthy of the Lord in all the *little* things of life: those which come closest to our hand, just within reach,—the little engagements, the little occupations, the little daily acts and conversations; in these the Christian is called upon to walk worthy of the Lord; and *here* is the difficulty. We can brace ourselves up for great events; but, while many Christians pass through *great events*, how they fail in *little things*, in what is called the minutiae of life! In our looks, and words, and daily duties, and smallest acts—what failure there! The difficulty lies in little things, just where we never expected it. God sets us down to *little duties, little cares, little occupations*, and in these He asks us to walk worthy of Him. Walk implies progress, growth in grace, advance. In everything worthy of the Lord there must be *progress*.

The Christian is called on in all these little things to stand and act in relation to *One*, and that One Christ. You have *only One to please*, the Lord Jesus. How it brings the Lord down into our smallest matters! How it manifests our Saviour, as deeply interested in the little steps of life! And yet, though *we* may call them *little*, in the eyes of Him who loves us there is *nothing* little. Everything is great with Him. And no act is so grand, so great, so glorious, as the manifestation of your Saviour in the smallest and humblest duties. There is nothing on which God sets such a seal as on that which is done for His glory.

“Unto all pleasing:” every little act done to please Him to the *uttermost*. Where there is deep love there will always be this *pleasing* of our Father.

“*Fruitful* in every good work.” Not *engaged* in every work only. You have to see that there is *fruitfulness*. Something in it, whether little or great, that will please your Heavenly Father.

“*Increasing* in the knowledge of God.” You cannot increase in the knowledge of God unless your heart is under the guiding and teaching of the Holy Spirit continually. “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” If you want to know the Word of God experimentally, to be able to set the seal of your heart to the knowledge of your understanding, there must be a walk worthy of the Lord. The whole character of God seems to

expand to the soul that is walking with God. Let us see that we are walking *worthy* of that dear Saviour unto all pleasing. God grant more grace and more of the power of the Spirit to this end.

Laid on Thine Altar, O my Lord divine,
Accept my gift this day for Jesu's sake ;
I have no jewels to adorn Thy shrine,
Nor any world-famed sacrifice to make ;
But here I bring within my trembling hand
This *will* of mine—a thing which seemeth small ;
And only Thou, dear Lord, can'st understand
How, when I yield thee *this*,—I yield *mine all*.
Hidden therein the searching eye can see
Struggles of passion, visions of delight,
All that I love, or am, or fain would be,
Deep loves, fond hopes, and longings infinite,
It hath been wet with tears and dimm'd with sighs.
Clench'd in my grasp till beauty it hath none ;
Here at Thy footstool, where it vanquish'd lies,
The prayer ascendeth—" May *Thy will* be done."
Take it, O Father, ere my courage fail,
And merge it so in Thine Own will that e'en
If in some desperate hour my cries prevail,
And Thou give back my gift, it may have been
So changed, so purified, so fair have grown,
So one with Thee, so filled with peace divine,
I may not know or feel it as my own,
But,—gaining back *my will*, may find it—*Thine*.

E. G.

"MEROZ."

JUDGES v. 23.

MEROZ is gone. No record of it except this verse remains. The most ingenious and indefatigable explorer cannot even guess where it once stood. But the curse remains ; the violent outburst of the contempt and anger which men feel who have fought and suffered and agonised, and then see other men who have the same interest in the result which they have, coming out cool and unwounded from their safe hiding-places to take a part of the victory which they have done nothing to secure. Meroz stands for that. It sometimes happens that a man or a town passes completely away from the face of the earth and from the memory of men, and only leaves a name which stands as a sort of symbol or synonym of some quality, some virtue, or some vice, for ever. So Meroz stands for the shirker ; for him who is willing to see other people fight the battles of life, while he simply comes in to take the spoils. No wonder Deborah and Barak were indignant. Their wounds were still aching ; their people were dead and dying all around them ; and

here was Meroz, idle and comfortable, and yet, because she was part of the same country, sure to get the benefit of the great victory as much as any.

It is so even in religion. To how many Christians does the religious life present itself in the enthusiastic and inspiring aspect of working and fighting for God? How almost all Christians never get beyond the first thought of saving their own souls! I think I am as ready as any man to understand the vast variety of forms under which self-devotion may be shown, and not to impute selfishness to that which simply is not unselfish in certain special forms. But, making all broad allowances, I think there is nothing which so comes to impress a man as the way in which the vast majority of men hold back and, with no ill-will but all good wishes, let the interests of their fellow-men and of goodness and of God take care of themselves.

Notice that the sin for which Meroz is cursed is pure inaction. There is no sign that its people gave any aid or comfort to the enemy. They merely did nothing. We hear so much about the danger of wrong thinking and the danger of wrong doing. There is the other danger of not doing and not thinking *at all*. It is hard for many people to feel that there is danger and harm in that, the worst kind of harm and danger. And the trouble comes, I think, from the low condition of spiritual vitality. A man who is but half alive, a poor helpless invalid shut up in his room, hears the roar

of human life going on past his windows, and it causes him no self-reproach that he is not in it, that he has no part or share in all this work. He does not expect it of himself. He recognises still the positive sins. He knows that he has no right to commit murder, or to forge, or to lie as he sits there. His helplessness has not released him from any of those obligations. But he does feel released from enterprise and activity. He is not called upon to do a well man's work. His task is only to keep himself alive. Now the spiritual and moral vitality of many men is low. What can revive it? What can put strength and vigour into it? There is a verse of St. John which, among many other things which it tells, tells this, "He that hath the Son hath *life*," and "he that hath not the Son of God hath not *life*." That is a great declaration. It says that if a man takes Christ, that if a man loves and serves Christ because Christ has redeemed him into the family of God, he really *lives*, *vigour* comes into him, *responsibility* lays hold upon him. The work of the world becomes his work. God's tasks become his tasks. The enemies of God become his enemies.

The curse of Meroz is the curse of uselessness; and these are the sources out of which it comes—cowardice, false humility, and indolence. These are the stones piled upon the sepulchres of vigour and energy and work for God, whose crushing weight cannot be computed. Who shall roll away

those stones? Nothing can do it but the power of Christ. The manhood that is touched by Him rises into life. It means that when a man has understood the life and cross of Jesus, and really knows that he is redeemed and saved, his soul leaps up in love and wants to serve its Saviour. And then he is afraid of nobody; and however little his own strength is, he wants to give it all. The cords of his self-indulgence snap like cobwebs. Then he enters the new life of usefulness. And what a change it is! What a change it is when a poor, selfish, cowardly, fastidious idle human creature comes to this! "Blessed is he that cometh to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." There is no curse for him. No wounds that he can receive while he is fighting on that side can harm him. To fight there is itself to conquer, even though the victory comes through pain and death, as it came to Him under whom we fight, the Captain of our Salvation, Jesus Christ.

My Master and Lord!

I long to do some work, some work for Thee;
I long to bring some lowly gift of love
For all Thy love to me!

The harvest fields are white—

Send me to gather there some scattered ears;
I have no sickle bright; but I can glean,
And bind them in with tears.

I would not choose my work;

The field is Thine, my Father and my Guide;
Send Thou me forth; oh, send me where Thou wilt,
So Thou be glorified!

I need Thy strength, O Lord !
 I need the quiet heart, the subject will ;
 I need the patient faith that makes no haste,
 The love that follows still.

And if Thou wilt not send,
 Then take my will, and bend it to Thine own,
 Till, in the peace no restless thought can break,
 I wait with Thee alone.

It is not hard to wait—
 To lean my weariness on Thee for rest :
 To feel, in suffering or in service, still
 My Father's choice is best.

I said, " It is not hard ; "
 And yet—and yet—Father, forgive Thy child,
 And through my soul's deep tumult let me hear
 Thy whisper low and mild.

The darkness is not light,
 The " chastening is not joy ; " this is Thy word,
 O Saviour ! one with us in tears and pain,
 Our Brother and our Lord.

Yet choose Thou still for me
 The harvest toil, amid the noonday heat,
 Where I may gather fruit that shall not die,
 And lay it at Thy feet ;

Or the slow, silent hours,
 When I must wait, and suffer, and be still,
 And in the patience which I learn from Thee
 Accept Thy *perfect* will.

ANONYMOUS.

CHRISTIAN INSENSIBILITY AND INDIFFERENCE.

JUDGES v. 16, 17.

THIS is the great complaint of the servant of the Lord throughout this chapter. In the midst of the energy and faithfulness manifested in Deborah, there were those of the Lord's people who were willing to let everything go on as it had done, who were unstirred by the cry of the faithful ones, and the utter collapse of everything divine in Israel. Hear her moans over them—"Gilead abode beyond Jordan; Dan remained in his ships; Asher continued on the seashore, and abode in his breaches; Reuben abode among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleating of the flocks; Meroz came not to the Lord to the help of the mighty." These are terrible charges to bring against God's people. These were the drag on the wheels of the Lord's chariot in Deborah's day.

And what was the state of Israel at this moment? "There was not a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel: they chose new gods; war was at the very gates." How terrible in the midst of

such a collapse of everything divine in Israel, to find so many of the Lord's people indifferent to it all, willing to have it so rather than be disturbed.

Yet is not this the picture on every side? How the Deborahs of our own day are left to do their work alone! How the selfish ones or faint-hearted drag them down in every earnest work! What excuses and pleas are put forward for letting things be as they are, and, at the same time, what energy and interest these very people throw into every pleasure and scheme of their own! What excuses for not "coming to the help of the Lord against the mighty" on the ground of delicate health; and yet, when some scheme or pleasure of *their own* comes before them what sacrifices and risks are made to carry it out! In perplexities or difficulties, or in things that concern us, what *efforts* are made—what *thoughts* occupy us by night and day to devise means and plans to accomplish our ends, and what indifference about means and opportunities to do the Lord's work! Where is the heart that is constantly looking round in every hour and in every change to see if anything can be done to win souls to Christ, or do some other work for God? Opportunities *sought*, did I say? Nay, opportunities are passed by or excuses by the thousand made for not using them! There are thousands on every side who would rather stay at home and "hear the bleatings of the flocks," than put forth one earnest effort to win a soul to Christ! No, indeed! the

“horsehoofs of Christians are not broken by their prancings.” There is no *dash* into the battle—no “*plunging* into the thick of the conflict to drag men out of sin and unbelief, and win them to the Lord.” This is what Israel needs now more than ever. If only the thousands and tens of thousands of half-hearted ones among the Lord’s people were in earnest, and set with true hearts “in season and out of season” to His work, the half of England, now fast asleep in sin and unbelief, would, humanly speaking, be a very “garden of the Lord.” Can we wonder that the “angel of the Lord,” bending over such a mass of Christian indifference to God’s glory, should exclaim: “Curse ye *bitterly* the inhabitants thereof”? Reader, peruse carefully this chapter, and see if you are one of those I have been describing. Hear what Deborah speaking *from earth*, and the angel speaking *from heaven*, thinks of you. See if it is not pregnant with the deepest meaning, and as if it were not specially written for our own time. Let us not shut our eyes to this solemn portion of God’s Word. In no chapter throughout that Word is this subject so strikingly brought before us, nor one that every Christian ought to lay more searchingly to heart.

Dear Lord ! to Thee, and only Thee, I dedicate my life,
 And in Thy service and Thy will, I find my great delight ;
 My will subdued and kept in bounds, and yet so wond’rous
 free,
 Because my little will in Thine hath perfect liberty.

Accept my dedication, Lord, and sanctify my heart,
And Thy sweet Spirit's influence into my soul impart ;
That all I daily undertake, and all I strive to do,
May beauteous and holy be, because Thou labourest too.

So shall the little things of life a sacred image wear,
And every service I can pay, a heavenly impress bear ;
And little worries, cares, and griefs, my heart will soon forget,
Because on one desire and aim my mind is wholly set.

That which Thou dost deny, my Lord, I would not ask again,
But only beg Thy wond'rous grace, that I may ne'er complain ;
For now my life is wholly Thine, and "this one thing I do,"
In every act to strive to praise and honour Thee anew.

I thank Thee, Lord, that though my path lies in a little sphere,
No action *Thou* wilt deem too small, for Thou hast placed me
there,
And wilt with dear and tender love, my daily task accept,
For ne'er a service *done for Thee*, my Lord, dost thou reject.

I sometimes long for some *great* thing, whereby to honour
Thee,
But with the space Thou dost provide, help me content to be ;
And serve as faithfully in small, as well as greater things,
Because whate'er the service be, to Thee it glory brings.

Let me *do* nothing, Lord, I may not first ask Thee to bless—
Let me *have* nothing that I cannot with Thee too possess ;
Let me *go* nowhere where Thy presence would not welcome be ;
So may my life be *set apart* to serve and honour Thee.

And what my service, what my love, when 'tis compared to
Thine ?
Compared to Thy great work of love, that work of love Divine ;
'Tis naught I can repay, my Lord, for Thy great love to me,
And for the blood of Jesus shed for all at Calvary !

'Tis this that bids my willing heart its grateful service give,
And this that makes me to Thy praise and glory long to live ;
My greatest honour and delight to be Thy servant here,
And know my humble services will please my Master dear.

So, Father, give me daily strength, for on Thine arm I lean,
And 'mid the joys and ills of life, Oh ! keep my heart serene ;
Close following in my Master's steps, encircled by His love,
While teaching others of the way, through Christ, to Heaven
above.

ANONYMOUS.

“GO IN THIS THY MIGHT.”

JUDGES vi. 14.

“Go in this thy might.” With this as our watchword let us advance; the work to be done is great, and there is little time to do it in.

I have a crown to win; and who can win it for me? I cannot reach it through the toil of another. I must win it for myself. No fellowman can *wear* it for me, and no fellowman can *win* it for me. I must press forward to the mark for the prize of my high calling. My right of entrance into the kingdom has, I know, been won for me by the Son of God. That was a work for Him alone to do. And He has done it! I owe my deliverance to His blood alone. I owe my acceptance to His righteousness alone. But still there remains for me a race to run, a prize to secure. And therefore must I work without ceasing, with my eye upon the glory to be revealed when the Lord returns, forgetting what is behind, reaching on to what is before, “if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

“Go then in this thy might.” Go as a believing

man to work for God—to work thine own work—thy personal work, which cannot be done for thee. Let the world see what faith can do. Let the Church see what one single man, leaning on his God and with nothing but his sling and stone, can effect. He who gave thee this work to do is God himself; and He who gave it to thee does not leave thee to do it at thine own cost, or in thine own strength. He provides both. He bids thee look to Him for both. However feeble thy strength and low thy purse may be, His resources are quite adequate for all that thou canst undertake. Let there be no fear of that. Fear of venturing too little, never fear of venturing too much. “My grace is sufficient for thee.”

Let nothing come between us and God, or break the continuity of communication between our souls and Him. The faith that devises great things is the faith which is intimate with God, and in sympathy with His mind. The faith that attempts and accomplishes great things, is the faith that goes straight to God in everything, and deals directly with Him. It is this faith that does great things; for it is the faith that never loses sight of God in any part of the work. It counts upon success simply because it knows the work is God's, and that whatever He is trusted for assuredly comes to pass. It looks not to the nature of the work, nor regards either its facilities or its difficulties; it looks alone to Him whose work it is; who never fails his

workmen; who is ever at hand for strength and succour.

And the time is short. The shadows are beginning to lengthen. The night, when no man can work, will soon be down upon us. Work, then, while the day lasts, and do not linger over your work as if you had abundance of time to do it in. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. "Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." The Master will soon be here to call His servants to their reckoning; have thy accounts all ready.

Put thy whole vigour into thy work. For the knowledge that the work is God's is not to make thee less energetic or fervent; but more so. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Work well; run well; fight well. Slack not thy hand at any time. If the work is worth being done at all, it is worth being done in earnest.

Count not the cost, and be not discouraged when called on to pay it. It may be through some personal trial, and weariness, and sacrifice, that the end is to be reached and the work done. Do not grudge it; but press on. The day of recompence is at hand. The reward is great enough to make up for all. A kingdom and a crown, such as God has to give, are sufficient compensations, however hard the work or heavy the sacrifice.

Leave it not half done. Carry it through.

H

Beware of stopping short in the middle, as if thou hadst done enough. Half-finished work for God looks ill. Perhaps, indeed, He may stop it; and may break it in pieces before thy eyes. Let not that dishearten thee. He knows what He is doing; He does it in wisdom and love; not out of arbitrary will, or to vex and discourage His labourers. It is for some glorious end that He does so; and if thou wilt just trust Him, in spite of the ruin, thou shalt see something greater and better rising out of it, fulfilling the end in view far more sufficiently than that which at first thou designedst. "He that believeth doth not make haste."

The Master's "Well done" will, even in prospect, animate and cheer; how unutterably will it gladden in that day when you hear it actually spoken to you by His own lips.

From an old English parsonage,
Down by the sea,
There came in the twilight
A message to me.
The quaint Saxon legend,
Deeply engraven,
Hath, as it seems to me,
Teaching from Heaven.
On through the hours
Its quiet tones ring,
Like a low inspiration,
"Doe the nexte thyngc."

Many a questioning,
Many a fear,
Many a doubt,
Hath its answering here.

Moment by moment,
Let down from Heaven,
Time, opportunity,
Guidance are given.
Fear not to-morrows,
Child of the King,
Trust them to Jesus,
"Doe the nexte thyng."

Oh, He would have thee
Daily more free,
Knowing the might
Of thy Royal degree.
Ever in waiting,
Glad at His call ;
Tranquil in chastening,
Trusting through all.
Coming and going,
No turmoil need bring,
His is the future,
"Doe the nexte thyng."

Do it immediately,
Do it with prayer ;
Do it reliantly,
Casting all care ;
Do it with reverence,
Tracing the Hand
Which placed it before thee
With earnest command.
Stayed on Omnipotence
Safe 'neath His wing,
Leave all resultings,
'Doe the nexte thyng."

Looking to Jesus,
Ever serener,
Working or waiting,
Be thy demeanour.

GO IN THIS THY MIGHT.

In the shade of His presence,
The rest of His calm,
The light of His countenance,
Live out thy psalm.
Strong in His faithfulness,
Praise Him and sing,
Then, as He beckons thee,
"Doe the nexte thyng."

From "Stillness and Suffering."

“THE ALPHA AND OMEGA.”

REVELATION I. 11-13.

CHRIST is here brought before us as the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet. Is it not to teach us that He is the beginning and end of all things? All things should be full of Him, and there should be nothing in which He is not. It is written (Eph. iv. 10), “He that descended is the same also that ascended up, far above all heavens, that He might *fill all things*.” Yes, everything is empty in which He is not—an empty universe, an empty world, an empty church, an empty heart, an empty life. He was exalted above all heavens that He might fill them: Lord Jesus, Thou art the One in whom all fulness dwells! Fill these empty vessels with Thyself, in all Thy grace and glory, and then will they be full indeed! All language points to Thee; all prophecy is full of Thee; make haste and come in Thy glory and flood this empty world with it, that all may know Thee, from the least to the greatest!

“What Thou seest write in a book.” Christ’s person and Christ’s truth must be *permanent*. They are not like other things, which may only have a

passing effect. They must be *written*, written on the memory and on the heart, in the life and in the character. He is like none other, and there is no truth like His truth. Like the fragments of the loaves on the mountain, they must be all gathered up because they were of *His* creation, and fell from *His* hand. So must it be with the Person and the words of the Lord Jesus.

"Send it to the seven churches which are in Asia." That which He makes known to us must be handed on. It is to be world-wide. If the light is in your own soul, let it shine out to lighten others. If you know the Saviour yourself, make Him known to those around you. Live to scatter seeds of truth wherever you go. Live to win souls to Christ in every way you can. Let this be your life aim. Whatever blessings you possess from Him "send it," *send it on*. Be sure the scattered seed will turn up again one day for your "joy and crown of rejoicing." God has said it, "My word shall not return void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it *shall* prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Yes, one thing or the other will surely turn up again—either your scattered seed "sown in weakness," for your blessed and eternal reward; or else your neglect will turn up again to your shame and everlasting confusion.

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me." That voice he had heard *behind* him. It is striking to observe how God's communications are so

frequently said to be from *behind* us: "thine ears shall hear a word *behind* thee;" "then the Spirit took me up, and I heard *behind* me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place" (Ezek. iii. 12). The communications of God are not for the eye, but for the ear; not for *curiosity*, but for *faith*. Therefore there is so much said, both by our Lord in the Gospels, and by the beloved Apostle in this book, about hearing: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith." It is the "hearing of faith." "John turned to see the voice that spake" with him, but he did not see what *he* looked for, but what *God* intended him to see. We are just like him. We look at things very much after the suggestions of nature, and expect them to turn out accordingly. There is so much about all our "turnings," even when we are under *Divine* training, that savours of sight and not of faith. When God wants us to see what is in His mind, how much there is of expectation that it should come according to our own thoughts—according to the way in which *we* think He should speak or act. All this is nature. To live by faith is no easy thing. We are always *turning round* to see what is in our own mind, and God is always showing us what is in *His*. So it was with John. God showed him the candlesticks and the glorious Person of the Son of God—just what He wanted John to see for the blessing of the Church of Christ in all ages. This principle runs through all Divine train-

ing, and we all feel, too, that it *has been* God's way with ourselves. Things have not turned out exactly as we expected them, but as He had planned and arranged for us, and it has resulted in blessing both to ourselves and others.

In Him I dwell,
Rejoicing in His love from day to day
I sit beside this one deep-springing Well
Dug in the desert way.

No ! not alone !
He talks with me, I listen to His voice,
My Lord hath claimed me, I am all His own,
How can I but rejoice ?

O Thou my Friend !
Did they but know Thee, could they turn away !
Would they not hours in Thy sweet presence spend ?
In Thine own sunlight stay ?

'Tis perfect joy
Amid the turmoil of this nether earth ;
'Tis golden bliss, unsullied with alloy,
O Christ, to learn Thy worth.

Here will I 'bide,
Taught of Thyself the better part to choose.
There's nought to gain, if parted from Thy side ;
Ah no ! but all to lose.

I can but sing !
I sing of Him whose precious blood was spilt.
Yea, Heaven above shall with His praises ring ;
Come ! join me if thou wilt.

TWO CRYING SINS.

THE BLOOD OF SOULS—NEGLECT OF PRAYER.

“BEFORE Dr. Chalmers reached his home on his return from one of his southern journeys, he visited a nobleman near Peebles. On a favourite theme—‘pauperism and its cure’—he kept the circle of friends gathered there entranced. Especially one old Highland chief was riveted by the lucid details he gave. They sat late. Dr. Chalmers’ bed-room was just across the lobby from the old chieftain’s room. As Dr. Chalmers was undressing, he heard a strange sound from thence, and then a deep groan. He hastened in. In a few minutes more all the company of visitors followed. The old man drew but a few breaths more and died. Dr. Chalmers loved souls. He gazed with outstretched hands as he bent over the clay. He was the picture of distress; the first to break silence. ‘Never in my life did I see or did I feel, before this moment, the meaning of that text, “Preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season.” Had I known that my venerable old friend was within a few minutes of eternity, I would have addressed myself earnestly

to him. I would have preached unto him and you Christ Jesus, and Him crucified. I would have urged him and you, with all the earnestness befitting the subject, to prepare for eternity. You would have thought it, and you would have pronounced it, out of season. But ah! it would have been in season, both as it respected him, and as it respects you.'

"And Charles Simeon—that faithful winner of souls—was once aroused to greater earnestness in this way. He came into his dying brother's chamber. These words met his ear: 'I am dying, and you never warned me of the state I was in, and of the danger to which I was exposed from neglecting the salvation of my soul!' 'Nay, my brother,' replied Mr. Simeon, 'I took every reasonable opportunity of bringing the subject of religion before your mind, and frequently alluded to it in my letters.' 'Yes,' exclaimed the dying man, 'you did; but that was not enough. You never came to me, closed the door, and took me by the collar of my coat, and told me that I was unconverted, and that, if I died in that state, I should be lost. And now I am dying, and, but for God's grace, I might have been for ever undone!' If Chalmers and Simeon had lessons like these to learn, what do not we require?

"There is a man, whom I ever loved, but who has become trebly dear to me since I learned to love his soul, is passing on, amid remarkable pro-

vidences, through hard discipline, still bartering his soul for shadows—BLINDFOLD. He suspects not the existence of this love of Christ, which gives me summer all the year,—and shall be my perennial spring of joy. And my terror is, that he will arrive among the realities of the unseen still deceived, still BLIND. One of those I love lies behind a screen of infidelity, with its hundred shades of disbelief. The vision of another is built round with forms and ceremonies,—the Church shutting out the Saviour. The professed faith of another is congealed by rationalism. Pleasure does the same thing in another case. For it matters little in the end whether they lean on a devil's or a so-called angel's arm on the journey, since every way Christ is missed—*met and passed by*—on the thoroughfare of life, unknown. And the waking,—the dreadful waking of these my friends in the dark land whither they are bound! Saviour God, let not my name at least be remembered by them there, as one of those who kept up for them the illusion, consented by timid silence to the deceit, so varied in each case, so effectual in all!”

Who can reckon the guilt at this moment lying on the Churches of Christ, as well as on private Christians, for negligence in prayer? Hours and weeks are thrown away on trifles, and prayer forgotten. Sleep, company, idle visiting, foolish talking and jesting, idle reading, unprofitable occupations, engross time that might have been redeemed

for prayer! Why is there so little anxiety to get time to pray? Why is there so little forethought in the laying out of time and employments, so as to secure a large portion of each day for prayer? Why is there so much speaking, yet so little prayer? Why is there so much running to and fro, yet so little prayer? Why so much bustle and business, yet so little prayer? Why so many meetings with our fellow-men, yet so few meetings with God? Why so little being alone, so little thirsting of the soul for the calm, sweet hours of unbroken solitude, when God and His child hold fellowship together, as if they could never part? In *one single* quiet hour of prayer, it will often make more progress than in days of company with others. It is the want of these solitary hours that not only injures our own growth in grace but makes us such unprofitable members of the Church of Christ, that renders our lives useless. In order to grow in grace we must be much *alone*. And it is also in this way that we become truly useful to others. It is when coming out fresh from communion with God, that we go forth to do His work successfully. It is in the closet that we get our vessels so filled with blessing, that when we come forth, we cannot contain it to ourselves, but must, as by a blessed necessity, pour it out whithersoever we go.

Many a burden, many a labour,
Many a fretting care,
Busy footsteps coming, going,
Little time for prayer ;—

Duties waiting on my threshold
Will not be denied,
Others coming round the corner,
Crowding to their side ;—

How shall I their number master ?
How shall I get through ?
How keep calm amid the tumult ?—
Lord, what shall I do ?

Give Thy strength to meet my weakness,
Give a heart at rest,
Give a childlike, trustful spirit,
Leaning on Thy breast.

Thou canst still the wildest conflict,
Bid the billows cease ;
Thou canst fill earth's busiest moment
With Thy perfect peace.

A. C. W.

TRIFLING WITH GOD.

1 KINGS xiii. 1-7.

MARK Jeroboam's conduct here.

First it is, "Lay hold on him;" then, when the hand of God is upon him, "Pray for me;" and then, when the deliverance is granted, "Come home with me and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward!"

"I mean neither to change my heart nor my life. I will not offer to thy God sacrifices which cost me anything, but I wish to stand well with the Lord by according a suitable reception to His prophet. Come into my house, man of God. Dine with me. You will see that I am not an enemy of thy God. Outwardly, perhaps, I do serve Him irregularly. But come, you'll bring me a certain easy feeling in my conscience which I want. Come, your presence will hallow a repast composed of meats sacrificed to the golden calf. I shall feel easier by eating in your company."

The world takes pleasure in attracting and drawing Christians into its paths. Worldlings have a conscience which troubles them often. They have

the Word of God, and it whispers odd sentences occasionally within to reprove them; and when the worldling can reply to his reproving conscience, "Such an one—a man of God—takes part in these pleasures which you are condemning; has this habit that you blame; enters into these frivolities; and enjoys these conversations that you reprove"—when, I say, the worldling can reply in such terms to the questions of conscience or of God's servants, they think that they have proved themselves right.

This is the reason why the world, at Satan's instigation, strives with subtle and persistent animosity to weaken and destroy what they call the "scruples" of Christians. It would like to have one or two in its army, who would serve as a pretext from behind with which it could do battle with God's commands.

Beware! you worldly people who prefer the counsel of your own hearts to the Word of God.

Beware! you Christians who yield to the solicitations of the worldly, and help to lose their souls by furnishing them with excuses, by giving them safe-conducts in their paths.

Mark the prophet's reply. He neither eats nor drinks there. He does not countenance Jeroboam by the slightest mark of fellowship or friendship, in thinking that his conduct is excusable, or that his reasons are admissible; that it is a light thing to disobey God, or that it is possible to mingle incense to the golden calf and the worship of the true God.

That which guides the man of God is the Word of God. "No," he says; "*for so it was charged me by the Word of the Lord.*" The Word of God is a shield. It is a strong fortress—a rock on which the feet of His saints are secure. Any kind of temptation and every kind of doubt can overcome the man who places confidence in his faith, in his prayers, or in his own sincerity; but no temptation can conquer the man whose soul is stayed upon the Word of God.

He might have said: "The words of the Lord are spirit, and they are life. To look at them merely in their surface or literal sense, is only carnal. When the Lord forbade me to enter into the king's house, or to eat and drink anything there, He simply wished to express His horror for idolatry. That seems clear. But to eat, to drink—God doesn't regard these things. Besides, the Lord has pity on the sinner. Is not that what the Lord seeks? Now I see. It is the *soul* of Jeroboam God is endeavouring to bring back. If He sends me to utter a sentence of extermination, it is that He may save him from his rebellious ways. Who knows? Perhaps, in *going in and sitting down to table with him, and by showing him that I am not a prejudiced man*, I may find a way to his heart. On the other hand, if I refuse, he will attribute my refusal to intolerance. His heart, already perhaps half moved, will close again and harden, and the great object that I have discerned in God's mission

will be defeated by my narrowness. Should I accept and go in with him, he will see at once that the man of God is also a man of some heart and understanding; that it is possible to serve God, and yet remain lowly and considerate. Moreover, I will not enter, as it were, alone; God is there with me; God is always with His children. I think I'll go in and seek to confirm the good intentions of the king. As for what has been commanded me, 'Thou shalt not return by the same road'—why, that's evidently a manner of speaking, meaning that God wished me to deliver my message promptly, to keep my aim well before me, and not to embarrass myself with any other affairs."

The prophet could have said all this; but he holds simply, narrowly, to the commandment of the Lord. He neither adds to it nor takes from it.

He takes the commandment of God as God has given it to him. God has spoken, and that is enough. He prefers the word of God to the word of man, and it is by that Satan is confounded. Christian reader, go thou and do likewise.

When the morning paints the skies,
And the birds their songs renew,
Let me from my slumbers rise—
Saying, "What would Jesus do?"

When I ply my daily task,
And the round of toil pursue,
Let me often brightly ask,
"What, my soul, would Jesus do?"

TRIFLING WITH GOD.

Would the foe my heart beguile,
Whispering thoughts and words untrue,
Let me to his subtlest wile
Answer, "What would Jesus do?"

When the clouds of sorrow hide
Mirth and sunshine from my view,
Let me, clinging to Thy side,
Ponder, "What would Jesus do?"

Only let Thy love, O God,
Fill my spirit through and through,
Treading where my Saviour trod,
Breathing, "What would Jesus do?"

E. H. BICKERSTETH, M.A.

“WHERE IS THE GUEST-CHAMBER?”

MARK xiv. 14.

READER, with eternity before thee, with the awful concerns of a never-dying soul hanging on the issues of this question, I ask thee solemnly before God, “Hast *thou a place in thine heart* for the Master?” Oh! sad case for thee if thou hast not. Turn not away from looking this matter in the face. Say not, “This was a *well furnished* room, but *my heart* is not prepared; my heart is not furnished; it is all sinful and vile and wretched.” Jesus will enter in if thou art ready and willing to take Him. He will make it fit for Him. He will furnish it for Himself. He Himself is all that is needed to make the chamber “all glorious within.” Thou canst not make it ready thyself. Christ is standing at the door. Oh let Him in, and all will then be done. He will make that chamber a *guest-chamber*, a place of joy and gladness, a place of song and victory. Only let Him in. Take Him as *thy Saviour*. Look to Him as having forgiven all *thine iniquities*, as having pardoned all *thy sins*. Look at the cross and see it all done, and done, sinner, for *thee*.

Cease from all *thine own* doings, and accept, just as thou art, the *finished* work of Jesus. Take this *finished* salvation, this all-sufficient, ever-loving Saviour, into thine own heart *now*. Listen to the sounds of redeeming love ringing in thine ears from heaven, in answer to the deep-seated inquiry in thy soul, "What must I do to be saved?" "It is *finished*!" Nothing to be done *to save thyself*; thou hast been saved *by the doing of another*. He has *done* the work. "It is *finished*!" Oh listen, believe, and rejoice!

Master of a household, head of a family, owner of an establishment with servants under thee, and for whose moral as well as spiritual welfare thou art responsible, "the Master saith unto *thee*, Where is the guest-chamber?" Are all the members of thy household children of God? Are thy children *daily* trained up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" Are thy servants taught that they serve not *thee* but the Lord Christ? Art thou living before them as a witness for Jesus? Is there something of heaven about thee and thy children and thy household? Master! master! "*the* Master saith unto *thee*, Where is the guest-chamber?" What answer canst thou make to God in these matters? Say not, "I pay them well; I work my servants not too hard; they have plenty of opportunities of attending to these things; I don't meddle with their religion; it is entirely a matter between their own souls and God." Master, say not so!

Thou *art* responsible for the state of their souls. On *thee*, master, will be visited their blood if thou see not to this matter. The ruin of *their* souls will only drag *thee* down deeper into hell if thou dismiss the matter in this way. Hast thou done all thou canst to set *Christ* before them? Hast thou spoken to them about their never-dying souls? Hast thou set "the truth" before them, and set them in the way of the truth, as well as thou art able to do it? Master, thou *art* responsible, and one day thou wilt see it. See that thou "refuse not Him that speaketh!"

O reader, ponder these things, I earnestly beseech thee. Live not *on* without Christ in thy guest-chamber! Make room for Him and His, though everything else be shut out! Let not the world or the flesh or the devil make a fool of thee by shutting out thy nearest and dearest Friend. The world shuts Him out: oh take thou Him in. The world will have none of Him: do thou make Him thy All. It is but for "a little while!" Oh to meet Him with His brand upon our brow and His right glad welcome in our hearts! "Heir of glory," may this be "for thee and me!"

Jesus, we heard Thee say it,
 That deep, unfathomed word,
 And we told Thee we were willing
 To call Thee Master and Lord.
 We gave Thee our allegiance,
 With true and loyal mind,
 We essayed to follow after,
 But no footsteps could we find.

The desert dust is shifting,
The storms are wild and rude,
Where men once saw Thee walking,
The sand-drifts may be strewed ;
Or is it that life's surgings
Have worn those prints away ?
Or are these eyes too misty
To trace them day by day ?

My disciples, My servants, My friends !
Ye who listened and heard that word :
Oh ! where, in what foreign country,
Have ye thought to find your Lord ?
The footprints are marked as ever,
The steps of the Son of God,
No lapse of years can erase them,
Deep set in tears and blood.

But the road was too rough and rugged,
And some coward hearts drew back,
Ye found one more smooth and sunny,
But ye lost the Master's track.
Ye have been amid wealth and pleasure,
But no traces could ye see ;
Ye have walked in earth's proudest dwellings,
They had no room for Me.

The world with its choicest pictures,
Its jewels rich and rare,
Has found you a place and a portion,
But I was a stranger there.
Ye sleep on its downy pillows,
Its couches of sloth and ease,
But I was a homeless pilgrim,
I had nothing to do with these.

Ye bask in its smiles of welcome,
It had only a frown for Me—
A rejected Man of Sorrows,
I was nailed to the cursèd tree.—

Ah ! surely 'twere hard to follow,
Where the Master was never seen,
'Twere hard to trace the waymarks
Where His feet have never been.

Have ye looked for sheep in the desert,
For those who have missed their way ?
Have ye been in the wild waste places,
Where the lost and the wandering stray ?
Have ye trodden the lonely highway,
The foul and darksome street ?
It may be ye'd see in the gloaming
The print of My wounded feet.

Have ye folded home to your bosom
The trembling, neglected lamb ?
And taught to the little lost one,
The sound of the Shepherd's name ?
Have ye searched for the poor and needy,
With no clothing, no home, no bread ?
The Son of Man was among them,
He had nowhere to lay His head !

Have ye carried the living water
To the parched and thirsty soul ?
Have ye said to the sick and wounded
"Christ Jesus makes thee whole ?"
Have ye told My fainting children
Of the strength of the Father's hand ?
Have ye guided the tottering footsteps
To the shores of the "Golden Land ?"

Have ye stood by the sad and weary,
To smooth the pillow of death ;
To comfort the sorrow-stricken,
And strengthen the feeble faith ?
And have ye felt when the glory
Has streamed through the open door,
And flitted across the shadows,
That I had been there before ?

Have ye wept with the broken-hearted
In their agony of woe?
Ye might hear Me whispering beside you,
'Tis a pathway I often go!
My disciples, My brethren, My friends,
Can ye dare to follow Me?
Then, wherever the Master dwelleth,
There shall the servant be!

C. P.

THE WASTE HOUSE.

HAGGAI i. 1-11.

MARK, the sin of the people here. "The time is not come that the Lord's house should be built." It was not a denial of God's claim upon them, it was a putting God off—"the time is not come." It implies that they acknowledged the justice of God's claim, but that the *present* was not the moment for it. God's claims ought to be met, but *not yet*.

Is not this the sin of the present day? God asks for His place in the heart of the sinner—that in that heart He may *now* find a dwelling-place; but the answer is, "Not yet." God asks the Christian for a dwelling-place in his heart. He asks that His house may be built *there*. The Christian feels that God's house in his soul is waste. God sends His prophet to that man's conscience, many a secret warning, many a solemn message. Still he goes on in spiritual slumber, and the only answer to God is "Not yet, not yet;" "the time is not come that the Lord's house should be built."

There is many a duty which conscience has again and again urged him to, many a plain command

passed over, many a weed in the garden of the soul that needs rooting out, many a foe in the very citadel that needs battling with, many a thing remaining, but perhaps ready to die, in the spiritual life; and he has heard the word, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain;" and yet the only answer he has given to God's message is, "Not yet;" "the time is not come that the Lord's house should be built."

Many a soul is dying in sin to whom he might, nay, he feels he ought, to speak; many a letter he writes in which he might say some word for Christ; many a pleasure he might forego for the sake of Christ; many a self-denial he might practise for the sake of not putting a stumbling-block in the way of some weak one, for the sake of Christ; but the secret answer of his soul to God's message is, "Not yet;" "the time is not come that the Lord's house should be built."

There is many a moment in his day's history in which he feels a gentle drawing of his spirit to prayer; many a silent whisper to break off some known sin; many a voice, louder than all the din around him, by its very gentleness urging him to lead a new life, to walk more consistently, to take up the cross and be a real Christian, but God's message receives only one answer—"they all with one consent began to make excuse;" "the time is not come that the Lord's house should be built."

Years and years pass over our heads, and all the while the Lord's house is in ruins. We grow to

threescore years and ten. We stand with bent limbs and furrowed brow, and locks whitened with care, on the very margin of the grave; we feel but a thin veil between us and the bar of God, which the next breath may rend asunder. Again God's voice comes to us, more earnest now than ever—a beseeching, an entreaty, an earnestness unheard before is in it. Again we answer more earnestly than ever, clinging to life more tenaciously than ever, "Not yet, not yet;" "the time is not come that the Lord's house should be built."

And while we are dwelling in our ceiled houses, and the Lord's house is lying in ruins, what is the consequence even in *this* life? "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put into a bag with holes." Look closely, reader, at these words, and mark well their meaning. *The end* of everything they did they missed. They sowed. For what end? That they might bring in *much*. Instead of that they brought in little. They ate. For what end? That they might be *filled*. Instead of that they "had not enough." So in everything they did, the *end*—the *satisfying* thing—was never gained. It is our old Gospel story—no satisfaction for the soul without Christ. *He* is the end, the satisfying thing in all. Toil without Him must end in vexation. Pleasure sought without Him must end in vexation.

and disappointment. Without Him we may sow, but we shall not reap. Without Him we may eat, but we shall still feel hungry. Without Him we shall drink, and still be thirsty. Without Him we may clothe ourselves, but after all we shall shiver with cold. Without Him every bag in which we put our treasure will have a hole in it. Oh! that they would believe Him who said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water *shall* thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

Do right! nor stop to count the cost;
 Nothing is ever really lost,
 Left at God's call:
 Let friendship, money, influence go,—
 Yet Christ remains! Dost thou not know
 That *Christ is All?*

.

Men may misjudge thy aim,
 Men may not praise thy name,
 Think they have cause for blame,
 Say thou art wrong;—
 Hold on thy quiet way,
 Heed not what men may say,
 Christ is the Judge—not they;
 Fear not, be strong!

.

Be brave, and dare to stand *alone*
 Against the foe;
 Thy Saviour stood alone for thee,
 Long, long ago:
 Be not a coward in the fight,
 Look up! be strong!
 The morn of Victory is near,
 The Day of Song!

A. C. W.

MOAB.

JEREMIAH xlviii. 11.

THE danger is, that, standing thus upon the lees from your youth, disturbed by no crosses, unsettled by no changes, you will finally become so fast rooted in pride and forgetfulness of God, as to miss everything most dear in existence. Nothing could be more perilous for you than just that which you deem your happiness. Nor is any word of God more pointedly serious than this,—“Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.”

Others, again, have been visited by many and great adversities, emptied about from vessel to vessel all their lives long, still wondering what it means, while still they adhere to their sins.

There is, alas! no harder kind of life than this,—a life of continual discipline that really teaches nothing.

Is it so with you, or is it not? Scorched by all manner of adversities, are you still unpurified by the fires you have passed through?

Defeated, crossed, crushed, beaten out of every

plan, baffled in every project, blasted in every object your soul has embraced, are you still unprofited? I have known such examples,—fig-trees that God has dug about every year, and that still remain as barren as if no hand of care had touched them.

Is there anything more strange, than that a man should be no wise instructed by the sufferings of a life,—separated in no degree from the world, and self, and the scent of his manifold evils, by that which God has sent upon him to correct his understanding, and purify his love, and fashion him even for the angelic glory? So he plods on still, contriving, and failing, and groping with his face downwards, and wondering that the earth will not consent to bless him! Oh, poor, weather-worn, defeated, yet unprofited man,—he cannot see when good cometh! There is no class of beings more to be pitied than defeated men who have gotten nothing out of their defeat but that dry sorrow of the world which makes it only more barren, and therefore more insupportable.

Do you find, my brother, that when you are thus emptied about, dislodged, agitated, loosened, you are purified? or does the bad flavour of your worldly habits, the scent of your old ambition, or your earthly pride remain?

A strange thing is it, that having no great persecutions to suffer for Christ, you cannot find how, as a follower, to endure these common trials. God forbid that you so little understand your privilege

in them. Bid them welcome when they come. Lift up your cry unto God, and beseech Him that by any means He will correct you, and purify you, and separate you to Himself.

A great sorrow recasts a soul. It either draws it nearer to the Friend whose intimacy must elevate it, or drives it into the far cold space of rebellion and despair. When the stripes of affliction are dealt to those whom God has called into His great school of work for souls, it is manifestly to give them new faculty in their calling. They needed to see deeper down into their own hearts, and thus into the hearts of others. Oh ! how many a sorrow of the poor may we have striven to comfort, while their experiences have told them that we stood outside it !

Lord, whatever sorrow or whatever change thy Providence may send me, let it not pass like the wind over the rock, but sanctify it to my soul, that it may be a blessing to me and through me to others !

Yes, I was living to myself—was dead ;
Self, with its hopes and dreams, was all I had ;
But soon the Lord fulfilled my prayer to know
The power of HIS CROSS ;—’twas death below.
I asked contrition,—and He sent me pain ;—
For purity—but anguish came again ;
I asked I might be meek,—He broke my heart ;
I asked—I knew not what—the better part.
I asked to know what death was to the world,
And quickly all my living hopes were spoiled ;
I asked to be like Him,—His image bear ;—
He placed me in a furnace, sitting there

Like one refining silver, till He see
 The reflex of His image bright in me.
 I asked that I the daily cross might bear,
 It lacerated me—the wounds I wear ;
 I blindly prayed, not knowing how—nor what,
 He took me at my word,—it mattered not.

Then I began to shrink from following near,
 And well-nigh prayed Him to depart, through fear ;
 To suffer was not pleasing to the flesh,
 I feared to pray, lest suffering come afresh.
 But I had gone too far,—*on I must go*—
 The virtues of His cross had pierced me through.
 In me His promise now fulfilled must be,—
 “I, lifted up, will draw all men to Me.”
 Ah! I had only heard of love—but now
 I feel it,—oh! I feel its living glow.
 He fastened on me *such* a look of love,
 Withering to self—tender, all words above ;
 Follow I must, whatever may betide ;
 I love the cross,—I shelter in His side,—
 That riven side, from which the glory beams,—
 Whence life and healing flow in living streams.

Only by *gazing* I become like Him,—
 His name shines out through me, He dwells within ;
 My calling is to live with Him alone,
 Unlike all others—lacking what they own ;
 Content to be by all the world despised,
 Knowing that I by HIM am loved and prized ;
 Content to be like Him, and call Him mine,
 In fellowship ineffable, divine ;
 Happy to lose the brighter portion *here*,
 That I may gain the weight of glory *there* ;
 Happy that when I well-nigh turned away,
 His hand was on me, would not let me stray ;
 Happy to know that He does all in love,—
 To bear the cross below, the crown above ;
 Happy that not *my* will but *His* be done ;
 Happy in prospect of the rest of Home.

J. W. T.

“THE LORD HIMSELF.”

I THESS. iv. 16.

NOTHING is of any value that does not spring from personal love to, and communion with, Christ Himself. We may have Scripture at our finger ends; we may be able to preach with remarkable fluency, a fluency which unpractised spirits may easily enough mistake for “power;” but if our hearts are not drinking deeply at the fountain-head—if they are not enlivened and invigorated by the realisation of the love of Christ, it will all end in mere flash. I have learnt to be increasingly dissatisfied with everything, whether in myself or others, short of real, deep, divinely inwrought communion with, and conformity to, the blessed Master. I long to know more of His own precious person, His work, and His glory. And then to live for Him: to labour, testify, preach, and pray, and all for Christ, and by the working of His grace in my heart.

And now that He has come and gone away, and that we, His weak ones, are left in a world that disowns and rejects Him, what has He left us to *cheer* our hearts, to *occupy* our souls, to feed our hopes? “HIMSELF.” “If I go and prepare a place

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for you, I will come again, and receive you unto *myself*: that where I am, there ye may be also :” (John xiv. 3 :) and so in kindred words of comfort does the Holy Ghost console the Thessalonian saints in their sorrow ; “For the Lord HIMSELF shall descend from Heaven with a shout : . . . then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air.” . . . If our *past* be HIMSELF, if our *present* be HIMSELF, our future is also HIMSELF, and “so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

“Would it rejoice your heart if you were sure to live to see the coming of the Lord, and to see His glorious appearing and retinue ? If you were not to die, but to be caught up thus to meet the Lord, would you be averse to this ? Would it not be the greatest joy that you could desire ? For my own part, I must confess that death, as death, is an enemy. But the thoughts of the coming of the Lord are most sweet and joyful. *It is the character of His saints to love His appearing*, and to look for that blessed hope. ‘The Spirit and the Bride say come ; even so, come, Lord Jesus.’ Come quickly, is the voice of faith, and hope, and love. If death be the last enemy to be destroyed at the resurrection, we may learn how earnestly believers should long and pray for the second coming of Christ, when this full final conquest shall be made.

“Hasten, O my Saviour, the time of thy return ; send forth Thine angels and let that dreadful joyful

trumpet sound; delay not, lest the living give up their hopes; *delay not, lest earth should grow like hell, and lest Thy Church by division be crumbled all to dust*; delay not, lest the grave should boast of victory, and having learned rebellion of its guest should plead prescription, and refuse to deliver Thee up Thy due. O hasten that great resurrection day, when Thy command shall go forth and none shall disobey, when the sea and earth shall yield up their hostages, and all that sleep shall wake, and the dead in Christ shall first arise, when the seed that thou sowedst corruptible, shall come forth incorruptible, and the graves that received but rottenness and retained but dust, shall return the glorious stars and suns. Return, O Lord, how long! Oh, let Thy kingdom come. The desolate bride saith come! For Thy Spirit within her saith come! The whole creation saith come, waiting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Thyself hath said—Surely I come. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

God doth not bid thee wait
To disappoint at last;
A golden promise, fair and great,
In precept-mould is cast.
Soon shall the morning gild
The dark horizon rim;
Thy heart's desire shall be fulfilled;
“WAIT patiently for Him.”

The weary waiting-times
Are but the muffled peals,
Low preluding celestial chimes
That hail his chariot-wheels.

THE LORD HIMSELF.

Trust Him to tune thy voice
To blend with seraphim ;
His "*Wait*" shall issue in "*Rejoice !*"
"Wait PATIENTLY for Him."

He doth not bid thee wait,
Like driftwood on the wave,
For fickle chance or fixed fate
To ruin or to save.
Thine eyes shall surely see,
No distant hope or dim,
The Lord thy God arise for thee :
"Wait patiently FOR HIM."

"OUR GOD SHALL COME."

PSALM i. 5.

"Gather my saints together unto me." What an expressive word—"my saints!" How the Lord appropriates them as His own! "They shall be mine, in that day when I make up my jewels." What precious words—"my saints," "my jewels!" What sinful, erring creatures we are! How do we daily and hourly provoke the Lord who loves us! What naughty children the Lord has to manage! How He may say of us, as Moses said of Israel, "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord since the day that I knew you;" and yet, "my saints!" "my jewels!" Oh, what grace! what wondrous love!

Mark another word here. "*Gather* my saints." "He shall gather the lambs in His arms." He shall "gather" them as a shepherd his sheep in the hour of weakness and danger—the weak ones, the nervous ones, those who start at a shadow and tremble at the fluttering of a leaf. They shall not be weak or nervous then. The frail body shall be dropped for ever, and they shall be clasped in an

embrace such as they have never known on earth, to a bosom of infinite love.

But observe the next word, "Gather my saints *together*." It is the family meeting; it is the grand re-union; it is the glad *assembly*. We shall not rise to meet the Lord individually—in isolations; we shall be gathered together. So the apostle speaks of our "gathering together unto Him." And again, "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up *together with them*." No more separations; no more divisions; no more discords; no more sects, or systems: all together! One mind, one heart, one joy, one glad meeting, without the shadow of a farewell ever darkening its shores! What heart does not bound at the thought!

And yet one word more—the sweetest of all—"unto *Me*." Ah! what would all the others be without this? Nothing, nothing! The foam, the dust, the shadow, the air! What would *that* meeting be without Jesus? What is *any* meeting without Him? The very notes of heaven would be discord. Its jasper walls would be hideous. Its very air would be oppressive. It would all be dreariness and darkness and death. With His name every song is sweet. In His smile every countenance is bright. Every chord of the golden harps will vibrate with His praise. Every voice will be vocal with His name. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!—throughout eternity. For this the Lord Himself prays: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be

with me *where I am*, that they may behold my glory." Love can only be satisfied with the presence of its object. So with the Saviour. He longs for us. He waits for us. We *must* be with Him. How can He be happy without us?

But who are these thus gathered? Mark it well, reader: "Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." They are those who have made a covenant with God through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are the *blood-bought* ones. They are those who have cast themselves—all sin and guilt, helpless and undone—on the finished work of the Lord Jesus. They are those who cry from the depths of their hearts,—

Other refuge have I none ;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee.

Reader, have you done this? If you have not, you are not in that covenant; and if you are not in that covenant now, can you think of *that* meeting? You may hide this sad picture from your conscience, or, worse than all, charge your sin on God, by a series of excuses. But it will not avail then. Mark the next verse: "The heavens shall declare His righteousness, for God is judge Himself." His righteous dealings will then be acknowledged by every lip and felt by every heart. Even the wicked shall be compelled to own it. And not only so, but righteousness shall be written on everything, as it never has been yet. And why? "For God is

judge Himself." He shall be judge in the earth, and the result will be righteous judgment. Misrule, injustice, oppression, will all end then. "Righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

And what is the practical lesson from all this for the world as well as God's people? There is a word for each at the close of this chapter. "Ye that forget God, consider this." Unconverted reader, weigh it well, lest God "tear thee in pieces." The day is at hand. Fly to Jesus. He is your only hope. Out of Him you are not safe for a moment. Be warned, and haste to the refuge.

Christian, "order your conversation"—or citizenship—"aright." Aim to glorify Jesus. Let His praise fill your heart. Let His image be clearly written on every act of your life. Be *whole-hearted* for Christ.

Meet again! yes, we shall meet again,
Though now we part in pain!
His people all
Together Christ shall call.
Hallelujah!

Soon the days of absence shall be o'er,
And thou shalt weep no more;
Our meeting day
Shall wipe all tears away.
Hallelujah!

Now I go with gladness to our home,
With gladness thou shalt come;
There I will wait
To meet thee at heaven's gate.
Hallelujah!

Dearest ! what delight again to share
Our sweet communion there !

To walk among
The holy ransomed throng.
Hallelujah !

Here, in many a grief, our hearts were one,
But there in joys alone ;

Joy fading never,
Increasing, deepening ever.
Hallelujah !

Not to mortal sight can it be given
To know the bliss of heaven ;

But thou shalt be
Soon there, and sing with me,
Hallelujah !

Meet again ! yes, we shall meet again,
Though now we part in pain !

Together all
His people Christ shall call.
Hallelujah !

***“THE PROVERB” AND THE “SAYING;”
OR THE SIGN OF THE LORD’S SECOND
ADVENT.***

EZEKIEL xii. 21-28.

2 PETER iii. 2-4.

THERE is in many respects a striking resemblance between the condition of Israel when about to enter into captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, and that which will characterise Christendom at the close of the present dispensation. It was a captivity from which they have been suffering ever since, and from which they will never recover till the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven.

The prophecies of the forthcoming judgments uttered by Ezekiel were received by Israel with unbelief and scorn. The nation’s unbelief had actually passed into a proverb, “The days are prolonged and every vision faileth.” As a matter of fact they were expressed thus, “The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off.” It was just saying, “Everything is going on just as it always did, and all the things so often foretold have ‘failed’ to come to pass. These judgments, if they

ever do come, are 'far off;' they will never come in our time if they ever come at all." It was this all-prevading unbelief that was necessary to complete the dispensation. This was the ripened point to which the nation must arrive ere these predictions could receive their fulfilment. It was the last drop in the brimming cup of unbelief. But now the moment had come. The vials of wrath so long withheld were to be poured out: "I will make this proverb to cease." "Say unto them" (in answer to *their* unbelieving saying), "the days are *at hand*, and the *effect* of every vision:" "I am the Lord: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak *shall* come to pass: it shall no more be *prolonged*, for in *your days* I will say the word, and *will perform it*, saith the Lord God."

And in *their* days it was fulfilled. With what exactness, and with what an awful outpour of wrath, let the reader peruse the prophecy of Ezekiel and he will see. Let the reader of these lines, whoever he may be, that secretly harbours in his soul the same unbelief of God's warnings pronounced on Christendom, read its terrible fulfilment in the dispersion and degradation of the Jewish nation up to the present hour. Let him see that the same word of God shall come to pass on Christendom, notwithstanding the gracious longsuffering now going on, and that it is written on the present state of the Jewish nation as with a sunbeam.

And for what is the world at this moment wait-

ing in order that God's prophecies of judgment may be poured out? Just this one and the same conspicuous mark of unbelief and scorn of coming judgment that characterised Israel. Till this unbelief becomes a "proverb" in men's mouths, prophecy will not have reached that point when it can be fulfilled. "There shall come in the last days scoffers saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things *continue as they were* from the beginning of the creation." And is not this the very unbelief of the present day? We point them to the rapidly thickening signs of the fulfilment of prophecy—the lawlessness pervading every department of society, the earthquakes in divers places, and other signs that the end is near—and what is the reply? Oh, "these things always were, and will be to the end. We have had so many predictions of the end, but they have all failed, and things keep going on as they always did"—"the days are prolonged and every vision faileth." "Where, in all these things, is the prospect of His coming?" "All these things *continue as they were!*" "Perhaps there is a day of judgment coming some time, but who knows when it will be, or whether it will ever come at all?" "He prophesieth of *many days to come*, and the *times that are far off.*"

Thus we see in our own day how the prophecy is fulfilling, and how near at hand is the moment when the Lord shall again say, "The days are at

hand, and the effect of every vision ;” “ It shall no more be prolonged.” “ In *your* days I will say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord God.”

Reader, the brimming cup of God's wrath is well-nigh full. This *last* sign is the Lord's warning that He is at our very door. Are you ready to meet the Bridegroom? If the day of the Lord came to-morrow would it find you in Christ—safely and assuredly in Christ—or resting on some forlorn *hope* that you are, without anything in God's Word to warrant that hope? Reader, the Lord is at hand! Where will that advent find you? What is the state of your soul? What is your hope before God?

In the horror of great darkness,
 In the starless midnight gloom,
 'Mid the shrieking of the tempest,
 'Mid the hissing of the foam,
 When the sons of men are quailing,
 When the strongest faith is failing,
 Sailor! cast an anchor,
 Wishing for the day!

When the chilly sea-fog curtain
 Gathers close with stealthy tread,
 While weird voices strangely whisper,
 “ Breakers, breakers close ahead ;”
 In the agony of keeping
 That stern watch that knows no sleeping,
 Sailor! cast an anchor,
 Wishing for the day!

When a more than midnight darkness
 Hangs its heavy pall of clouds,
 When a worse than ocean tempest
 Rattles thro' the shiv'ring shrouds,

THE PROVERB.

When the life-blood is congealing,
When the heart and brain are reeling,
Christian ! cast an anchor,
Wishing for the day.

When the icy hand of sorrow
Lays its grasp upon thy heart,
And the very thought of thinking
Makes thine inmost being start,
When the pulse of hope is failing,
When the last faint star is paling,
Christian ! cast an anchor,
Wishing for the day.

When the One who's gone before thee,
In the bitter thorny road,
Bids thee trace the bleeding foot-prints
Of the wounded Son of God !—
When the willing spirit chooses,
And the writhing flesh refuses,
Christian ! cast an anchor,
Wishing for the day.

When the corn of wheat is dying
In its dark forgotten tomb,
And the glowing golden harvest
Scarcely glimmers through the gloom,
When the hand that sows is weary,
And the barren land looks dreary,
Christian ! cast an anchor,
Wishing for the day.

When the sound of coming judgment
Falls on many a startled ear,
And a voice is on the mountains,
Lo ! the Bridegroom draweth near !
When earth's bravest sons are quaking,
And the world's foundations shaking,
Christian ! ride at anchor,
'Tis the break of day !

“THE TIME IS SHORT.”

I COR. vii. 29-32.

WHAT a practical doctrine is the prospect of the immediate return of our Lord Jesus Christ! Observe it in these passages. “The time is short.” The Apostle’s meaning here needs to be understood. The time for everything is limited. There is a time for childhood; but it is soon over, and it passes into youth. There is a time for manhood; but its years are few, and quickly it passes into old age. There is a time for weeping, for rejoicing, for buying and selling; but it has narrow limits. It is passing quickly.

So with this dispensation. It is “short.” God has put a limit to it, and now it has all but run out. “*His times*” (1 Timothy vi. 15) are coming, and man’s day will be over. Then “a King shall reign in righteousness.” It is this outlook that should now fill every Christian’s heart, for “the time is at hand.”

What are the practical conclusions the Apostle draws from this truth?

The *first* refers to all *domestic* relations—for *home*

influence is the sacred source which gives character to everything in life—"they that have wives be as though they had none." The dearest ties and associations of life must not detain the heart. It must be taken up only with Jesus, and every affection must be kept in subjection to Him. There must be a sitting loose to the nearest and dearest for His sake. This must be the *test* of everything, and must give its character to every domestic duty, and to every affection of the heart.

Secondly, "they that weep as though they wept not." There are the sorrows and trials of life. These too must take their tone from this truth. They are now nearly filled up. We are not like Mary to *continue* at the sepulchre, but to speed with messages of love to the weeping ones. We must sit loose to our sorrows, for sorrow will soon end.

Thirdly, "they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not." There are joys, but they must not detain the soul. There are hours of delight. God plants flowers in our way; yea, many that are sweet. But to all we must sit loose. The one Rose of Sharon has won our hearts, and this must impart its fragrance to every other. Christ is our joy.

Fourthly, "they that use this world as not abusing it," or "not using it *to the full*." It does not mean abusing it in the sense of *perversion*, but only *the right use of what is according to God's will*. We are to engage in its business, its duties, its call-

ings; to *use* its money, its *air*, its opportunities for good—to “use” them all *for the Lord*. Without Him nothing; with Him all things according to His will.

And why? “The fashion of this world passeth away.” The word “fashion” is here used of the masks the actors wore on the stage. They were masked, or represented other characters—not their own. Thus everything in *this* world is masked. It is *unreal*. It is deceiving and untrue. It cheats and mocks its votaries. *It never shows its true side*. But its day is nearly over. The mask shall be torn off. The true, the real, and the beautiful shall shine forth from the brow of the King of kings, and be reflected in everything under heaven. Oh for that day of glory and beauty!

One more word. “I would have you without *carefulness*”—not without *sorrow*; not without *trial*. No; for “through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom.” But “without carefulness.” Christian, cast your care upon Jesus. He can, He will, bear it all for you *all the way*. Carefulness makes us anxious, distracts and disturbs us, makes the “hands hang down and the knees feeble.” Cast it all on God and look up. “The time is short:” “the Lord is at hand;” “lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh.”

When we reach our peaceful dwelling,
On the strong, eternal hills,
And our praise to Him is swelling
Who the vast creation fills—

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THE TIME IS SHORT.

When the paths of prayer and duty,
 And affliction, all are trod,
 And we wake and see the beauty
 Of our Saviour and our God.

CHORUS.

Oh ! 'twill be a glorious morrow
 To a dark and stormy day,
 When we smile upon our sorrow,
 And the streams have pass'd away.

With the light of resurrection,
 When our changed bodies glow,
 And we gain the full perfection
 Of the bliss begun below—
 When the life that flesh obscureth
 In each radiant form shall shine,
 And the joy that aye endureth
 Flashes forth in beams divine,

CHORUS.—Oh ! 'twill be, &c.

While we wave the palms of glory
 Through the long, eternal years,
 Shall we e'er forget the story
 Of our mortal griefs and fears ?
 Shall we e'er forget the sadness,
 And the clouds that hung so dim,
 When our hearts are fill'd with gladness,
 And our tears are dried by Him ?

CHORUS.—Oh ! 'twill be, &c.

Shall the memory be banish'd
 Of His kindness and His care,
 When the wants and woes are vanish'd,
 Which He loved to soothe and share ?
 All the way by which He led us,
 All the grievings which He bore,
 All the patient love He taught us,
 Shall we think of them no more ?

CHORUS.—Oh ! 'twill be, &c.

We shall read the tender meaning
Of the sorrows and alarms,
As we trod the desert, leaning
On His everlasting arms ;
And His rest will be the dearer
When we think of weary ways,
And His light will shine the clearer
As we muse on cloudy days.

CHORUS.—Oh ! 'twill be, &c.

I. A.

THE CHRISTIAN'S LOT.

DANIEL xii. 13.

GOD said one word to Daniel—the last word in this book : “Go thou thy way till the end be : for *thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*” Sweet word for the servant of God closing a life of devotedness to Him ! “Thou shalt *rest*, and stand in thy lot !” Such shall be the word to all who cast in their lot with God. They shall have the sweet assurance, ere they pass through the dark river of Jordan, that they are passing on to their rest. They have cast in their lot with Jesus. With Him they shall rest. With Him they shall dwell for ever. “He that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.”

Reader, Daniel knew God. It was no abstraction, no form, no dogma, no creed. It was God *Himself*. Do you know *Christ*, or do you know *of* Christ ? It is one thing to know *of* Him ; it is quite another to know *Him*. “Thousands know *of* our Queen, but only a few know *her*. Yet how many identify

knowing *of* God with knowing *God* ! A man reads about God, hears about God, thinks about God, sees God in nature, traces God in providence, admires God in revelation, and then he thinks—I know God. All the time he knows not *God*. It is only *OF* God.

“To know God is much closer and more personal. It is to have heard Him speaking to us as none other ever has spoken to us. It is to have seen sin in the light of His presence, and heard Him saying, ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee.’ It is to come into spiritual contact with God. It is to have seen Him with faith’s eye, to have grasped Him with faith’s hand as a grand reality, an actual living presence. It is to have felt the sunshine of His smile ; to have felt what He is in His *breakings*, and what He is in his *healings*, of our inward spirit. Till there have been some such passages between your soul and God, you can never know Him.” This is what goes to make real religion. This is conversion. This is holiness. This is peace. This will be heaven. All the rest is merely to know *of* God. This is to know *God*.

And what is our joy in Christ ? It is this, that Christ knows not *of* us, but that He knows *us*. “I know *my* sheep, and *am known* of mine.” Yes, Christian reader, Jesus knows *you*, not *of* you. You know *Jesus*, not *of* Jesus. He knows *all* about you ; and your heaven on earth is that you know *Him*.

“There are some who will read these words to

whom, I fear, the things of God will bring little or no solemnity, they are so used to them. They read the Word, but the message of mercy is just a pleasant tale. The theme is a familiar one. They are conversant with the way of salvation as much as with any other familiar subject. Grace has reached their understanding, but it has not taken hold of their hearts. They can define faith, but they cannot use it. They can repeat the promises, while they do not hold *one*. They are learned to speak well, and are well acquainted with the Bible, and they know of Christ. Their lives all the time are unchanged. They live selfishly. Their tempers are unchanged. Their desires are covetous. Their tastes are worldly. And yet they can talk fluently about the love of God. But follow such people to their own rooms. Is there secret communion? Where is the unseen delight of a soul feeding upon God's Word? Where is the tenderness of a soul that feels the touches of God's Holy Spirit? Where is the sensitive conscience? Where is hidden purity? Where is the spiritual conflict? Where is the image of Christ? What can all that knowledge of theirs avail? Is a man's *intellect* the man? Is not the *living soul* the man? Has not grace been received in vain? Is there not the name to live while the soul is *dead*?"

Reader, *be* a Christian. Let your *life* speak for God. All things else are but as the shadow. This only is substance. Believe in Jesus, love Jesus,

follow Jesus; and your end will be that of the holy prophet. You will enter into "rest," and stand in your lot in the resurrection-morning.

O meet me in the valley,
When heart and flesh shall fail,
And softly, safely lead me on,
Until within the veil.

Then faith shall turn to gladness
To find myself with Thee,
And trembling hope shall realise
Her full felicity.

Angels shall gather round me,
And joyous greetings give,
A sinner brought from sinful earth
With them to love and live.

But angels shall be silent,
While dearer spirits press
To mingle with my gushing joy
Their calmer happiness.

And meekly shall they bear me
Through that bright company,
Towards the brighter throne of Him
Who died to welcome me.

No further guidance needing,
Together shall we bend;
And bless the grace, that loving once,
Hath loved us to the end.

O meet me in the valley,
When heart and flesh shall fail,
And softly, safely lead me on,
Until within the veil.

And, Saviour, deal as kindly,
With those I leave behind,
Till each shall, in our heavenly home,
As sweet a welcome find.

"THE MORNING COMETH AND ALSO
THE NIGHT."

ISAIAH xxi. 12.

A VOICE from out of Idumea calls earnestly to the prophet in the midst of Israel's night of sorrow, and trouble, and trial, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" Would that everywhere in the Church of Christ there were that earnest desire to know something of the "night" the Church of Christ and Israel is now passing through. St. Paul, speaking of the coming of the Lord the second time, says, "and that *knowing the time*." But the Church does *not* know the time, and is careless to ask about it. The coming of the Lord is at our very door, and few are seeking to "*know the time*," few are asking earnestly "What of the *night*?"

Turning to the question addressed to the prophet, we observe his answer: "The morning cometh." The morning is put *first*, though not the *natural* order, for the night precedes it. That which is the *desire* and *joy* of the soul is always first. The "*hope* of the Church," the Lord's second advent, fills the prophet's soul, and he gives utterance to it. So

it is with the beloved Apostle in Patmos. From the fifth chapter of the book of Revelation we have the *night* of sorrow, and sin, and trouble brought before us. But the Apostle did not *begin* with this. The first four chapters are full of the glories and joys of the people of God. It is the same order—"the *morning* cometh;" then "the night."

Looking through all the Epistles we see the same order. It is "that blessed hope" which fills nearly every chapter and takes precedence of every other subject. "Watchman, what of the night?" is the earnest cry of a sorrowing church and a troubled world. "The *morning* cometh" is the prophet's joyous answer. Then turning to the *chronological* order for a moment, he says, "and also the night."

Surely, the darkest chapter in the history of Israel and the Church of Christ we are entering upon *now*. The night is deepening as it has never done before—deepening into its darkest hour. But, on the other side, what a "morning is before us!"

Last Sunday week, July 16th, was the date of the close of the Mohammedan Hegira or twelve hundred and sixtieth year of the reign of the great Eastern Antichrist—"the time, times, and dividing of times" of Scripture prophecy. Strangely enough, the tradition of the Mussulman world, that a Messiah is to appear *this year* "to make all things new" in their history is also their leading thought

at the present moment. Turning again to the prophet's word, "the morning cometh," we see the position of the passage, and the stirring, startling events with which it is connected. There is from chapter eleven to the end of chapter nineteen, those great events which correspond with chapters sixteen to twenty, in the book of Revelation. There is the destruction of Babylon, and all the great world powers which took their rise in Nebuchadnezzar, at the beginning of Gentile dominion, and which have been, and continue to be to the present hour, the great persecutors of God's ancient people Israel. Along with this, there is associated the restoration of the Jews to national prosperity and spiritual conversion to God in their own land—Jerusalem. (See Isaiah, 11th chap., 11th verse; 14th chap., 1-3rd verses; 18th chap., 7th verse; and 19th chap., 23-25th verses.) Along with all these startling events Egypt is associated (see 19th chap.). Let the reader study these chapters well, and then let him look out in the East and see what is now actually transpiring, and let him look at it in connection with all the many other signs of the Lord's second advent multiplying on every side. He will not fail then to "know the time," and will be able to say with the prophet, "The morning cometh." "Behold I come quickly; blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments; lest he walk naked, and *they* (the coming Lord and His Church and angels) see his shame."

Oh ! soon to be with Jesus,
 When every pang shall cease,
 And nature's pain and weakness
 Give place to sweetest peace.

Yes, *soon* to be with Jesus,
 In yon bright home of day :
 Oh ! how my spirit yearneth
 To leave this house of clay—

This house so full of weakness,
 So broken down with pain—
 But *soon* no pang nor sorrow
 Shall ever come again.

Oh ! soon to be with Jesus—
 Him whom my soul adores,
 Far more than earth's poor pleasures,
 Or its unbounded stores.

My strength when health is failing,
 My joy in time of grief ;
 And when in trouble sinking,
 He gives me sweet relief.

My lips may lose their power
 His preciousness to tell ;
 But ah ! my heart is happy
 As on His grace I dwell.

Oh ! soon to be with Jesus,
 Who suffer'd in my place,
 When I shall know the fulness
 Of His unfailing grace.

Adorable Lord Jesus,
 Who answer'd every claim,
 I know of nothing sweeter
 Than Thy most precious name.

By day when pain is racking,
 By night when sleep has flown,
 I think upon the goodness
 And grace that Thou hast shown ;

THE MORNING COMETH.

The love and sweet compassion
Extended unto me,
When in my wayward folly
I wander'd far from Thee.

In thankful adoration,
My Lord, to Thee I gaze,
And whilst I bow in worship
My heart is filled with praise.

Through Jordan's deep dark waters
My Lord has pass'd before,
And in the path He opened
I pass to Canaan's shore.

Oh ! soon to be with Jesus,
The lowly One who trod
This desert-scene, declaring
The wondrous love of God !

In Him my soul is happy ;
And *by Him* I am blest ;
And, freed from Nature's weakness,
With Him I soon shall rest.

Oh ! precious Jesus, keep me,
Still dwelling on Thy love,
Until the happy moment
Thou callest me above.

G. C.

"THE HEART'S DESIRE AND PRAYER."

ROMANS X. 1-4.

"BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." Observe, it begins with the "heart's *desire*," and this issues in a *prayer*. The source of the prayer is in the recesses of the heart, and the prayer that has not its source there, however *beautiful*, is nothing but mockery.

I appeal to you, as a dying man, speaking to dying men and women, "Are you saved?" Has that religion you profess given you peace with God? Has it brought you to know Christ as *your* Saviour? Many have just enough religion to make them *miserable*. Search and see what *yours* is. Has it brought you to Jesus?

"I bear them record, they have a zeal for God"—a noble testimony! Oh, to have a *zeal for God*! Would that we saw more of it. Would that there were less stagnation. But mark how the text goes on—"but not according to knowledge." Do you not see it is possible to be very zealous about religion, and yet *ignorant of God*? Here were

people who bore the high and holy name of Israel ; people *very* religious, excessively zealous, and yet *without God*. How awful to think of religion *without* Christ ; religion without a broken heart for sin ; religion that has never taken man out of self into Christ. Religion *without God*—this is the terrible nightmare of multitudes. A zeal for God, but ignorant. What is *your* religion ? Have you taken it from the word of God ? The only true way of finding what God is, is from His Word. Have you sought it there ? Ask Him to make the scales drop from your eyes. “Lord, open my eyes ; let me not be under a cloud.” Show me Thy Word—what *I* am, what *Thou* art.

And what is the result of this ignorance ? “They being ignorant of God’s righteousness”—Christ, the righteous One, coming into the world to take the place of the unrighteous one—“they being ignorant” of this, “*go about* to establish their own righteousness.” Man feels his need of a righteousness. He is not fit to stand before God. So he “*goes about*” his good deeds to quiet his conscience ; he “*goes about*” his thoughts, comparing himself with an unreal standard. And what for ? That he may get a righteousness on which he may rest. He tries to get a resting-place, but he cannot. And why ? Because “they have not *submitted* themselves to the righteousness of God.” “*Submitted*”—it is the *bending* of the soul to something it never had before. It is accepting, as a little child, Christ as

our righteousness, and renouncing for ever every other trust.

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Here is the remedy. The first word answers it all—*Christ*. Christ is the end of the law, the end of everything. Come and take Christ, and then you have it. Christ is a great Saviour. Take this Saviour as yours; and do it now. Submit yourself. "Come, and He will in no wise cast you out." Take this Saviour as yours; take His precious blood to pardon you, His righteous robe to cover you. My earnest desire and prayer to God for you is that you may be saved.

I have a Saviour—He's pleading in glory—
So precious, tho' earthly enjoyments be few;
And now He is watching in tenderness o'er me:
But oh! that *my* Saviour was *your* Saviour too!
For you I am praying—I'm praying for *you*!

I have a Father—to me He has given
A hope for eternity, precious and true;
And soon will my spirit be with Him in heaven:
But oh! that He'd let me bring *you* with me too!
For you I am praying—I'm praying for *you*!

I have a Harp in those regions all-glorious—
Away, far away in that ocean of blue;
And there shall it breathe out its music melodious:
But oh! could I know one was tuning for *you*!
For you I am praying—I'm praying for *you*!

I have a Crown—and I'll wear it for ever—
Encircled with jewels of heavenly hue;
'Twas purchased by Jesus, my glorified Saviour:
But oh! could I know one was purchased for *you*!
For you I am praying—I'm praying for *you*

176 *THE HEART'S DESIRE AND PRAYER.*

I have a robe—'tis resplendent in whiteness,—
Awaiting, in glory, my wondering view ;
Oh, when I'll receive it, all shining in brightness,
Dear friend ! could I see *you* receiving one too !
For you I am praying—I'm praying for *you* !

I have a Rest—and the earnest is given,—
Though now, for a time, 'tis conceal'd from my view ;
'Tis life everlasting—'tis Jesus—'tis heaven :
And oh ! dearest friend, let me meet *you* there too !
For you I am praying—I'm praying for *you* !

I have a Peace—and it's "calm as a river,"—
A peace that the friend of the world never knew ;
My Saviour alone is its Author and Giver :
But oh ! could I know it was given to *you* !
For you I am praying—I'm praying for *you* !

For you I am praying—for you I am praying !
For you I am praying—for you, yes, for *you* !
And soon shall I hear you rejoicing and saying—
"Your dear, loving Saviour is *my* Saviour too !"
And pray'r will be answer'd for you—yes, for *you* !

And when He has found you, tell others the story,
How Jesus extended His mercy to you ;
Then point *them* away to the regions of glory,
And pray that your Saviour may bring them there too !
For pray'r will be answer'd—'*twas answer'd for you.*

Oh, speak of that Saviour, that Father in heaven,
That Harp, Crown, and Robe which are waiting for you,—
That Peace you possess, and that rest to be given !
Still praying that Jesus may save them like you !
And pray'r *will* be answer'd—'*TWAS ANSWER'D FOR YOU.*

S. O'M. C.

**"EVERY MAN WALKETH IN A VAIN
SHOW."**

PSALM xxxix. 6.

LOOK at the world in its best garb, and see whether it forms an exception. We are passing through one of the squares in our great metropolis. You see the stream of carriages drawing up to that noble mansion. The figures step out one by one, and enter the spacious hall. It is the ball-room. There is the music, the song, and the dance; the glitter of the gay, the brilliant, and the beautiful on every side. "Surely," you say, "there is no sorrow there." Ah! it is a gilded mask. There is the gnawing worm and the broken heart underneath that beautiful exterior. There lie shrouded envyings, hatreds, pride and vanity, disappointment and vexation, and all the other miseries of a heart not at peace with God. Yet this is the world in its fairest garb. This is the world's best antidote for a bleeding heart, for stifling the rebukes of conscience, or drowning the deeper sorrows of the soul. And what a spell is there for the youthful heart! Yet what a sad scene! The light step is there,

M

but it treads the way of death. You hear the melodious voice, but there is not a tone in it that can take up the "new song." The garland decks the forehead, but the fetters of sin bind the heart. Beauty stamps the countenance, but the deformity of spiritual death is graven on the soul. What a sickening intermingling!—the garland and the fetter, natural beauty and spiritual deformity, outward health and inward death, the brilliance of the gay hall, and the blackness of eternal darkness! O world, what a vanity! With what an array of deceptions art thou furnished for ensnaring the heart of man—burdening the soul, but never lightening it—emptying, but never filling it—wounding, but never healing it! Thus the soul is deceived, and, rushing madly forward, grasps the unreal for the real, and prefers thy gilded tinsel to the fairer beauty of Him who is "the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely." Ah! sinful trifler with eternity, it is not *there* thou canst ease thy heart of its heavy burden. Rest such as thy agitated spirit seeks is to be found only in Jesus. There is repose for thy aching heart; there is the panacea for thy many bleeding wounds; there is peace that shall allay the stings of a guilty conscience and rest that shall make thee calm amid the blasts and tempests of a stormy world. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Reader, you may perhaps be one of those who

"care for none of these things." But learn this lesson : God can make you serious. You may jest, or cavil, or sport away life's precious hours in folly and sin, but God can presently make your home desolate and your heart to bleed. The sky all bright to-day shall to-morrow have a cloud that will spread and spread till your horizon is robed in sackcloth. Trifle if you will, but God will one day disturb your folly, and draw the pall of sorrow over your heedless heart. You are sporting on the borders of an abyss, into which you may be plunged before nightfall. A slight pressure on the brain, a moment's cessation of the heart's beating, and you are gone to the bar of an offended God ! What a solemn thought ! Who shall declare the spirit's first interview with its Omnipotent Judge ! Reader, think of it.

And what are you losing *now* ? I cannot tell you. Go to the dying chamber of some neglecter of salvation and despiser of God's grace. Mark his groans and tears. Mark the throbblings of his heart and his looks of despair. Hear him saying, " I heard of salvation, but neglected it. I received warning after warning, but made light of them. I had strivings of the Spirit within me, but stifled them. There is a Saviour, but not for me ; He has gone. There is mercy, but not for me ; it has gone. They are gone, and I am going—a lost soul, to meet an offended God. I die without hope, without heaven, without God. I have sown to the

wind, I am about to reap the whirlwind. I have sought the world, but in seeking it I have lost my soul—*I have lost my soul!*” Tear off the mask from the majority of death-beds, and read this their *true* history. Take warning, reader; it may be yours. “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.”

A little while—a little while,
 And all this changing scene,
 Its busy thoughtless crowds shall be
 As though they had not been.
 The festive throng, whose noisy song
 Is full of empty glee;
 And men of crime, who live for time,
 Oh! whither shall they flee?

A little while—a little while,
 The palace of the proud,
 With all their pomp, and all their pride,
 Shall vanish as a cloud!
 The schemes they laid, the plans they made,
 Of hopeful years to come;
 These hopes are crush'd—these joys are hush'd,
 In that dread day of doom!

A little while—a little while,
 The sinner's joys are o'er;
 The vain, the godless scenes he loved,
 Can now be found no more.
 The sounds of mirth fade from the earth,
 All its gay dreams are past;
 And 'midst the gloom the day of doom—
That day—has come at last!

A little while—a little while,
 The Judge is on the Throne!
 The trumpet's sound, the fiery flame,
 Proclaims that “It is done!”

What wild despair now fills the air,
While sinners madly cry,
"Mountains descend ! ye rude rocks rend !
And hide us from His eye !"

A little while—a little while,
And saints who sowed in tears,
Shall reap in everlasting joy,
When their loved Lord appears.
How sweet the song of that saved throng,
When they His glory share,
How pure their joy, without alloy,—
For ever freed from care.

A little while—a little while,
The tribulation o'er,
The sin within, the ills without,
Shall grieve their hearts no more.
The world's false smile shall not beguile
Their thoughts from Him they love ;
For in that place they see His face,
With perfect ones above.

A little while—a little while,
And Time's dark dreams are o'er ;
I charge you then, ye earthly cares,
Disturb my peace no more.
Away with fears—away with tears,
I'll weep, as weeping not,
While pressing on to reach that crown
Which my Redeemer bought.

C. H. I.

“THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS.”

NUMBERS xxiii. 10.

“LET me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like His.” Ah, but to die the *death* of the righteous, we must live the *life* of the righteous! How many are there who would gladly die the *death* of the child of God who will not live his *life*! No. It may not, cannot be. To die *in* the Lord, we must live *to* the Lord. We must be brought to Jesus by the Spirit of God. We must lay hold of His finished salvation for our dying souls. Thus we have eternal life. And this life thus begun in us is perfected day by day. Amid many failures and sins, many shortcomings and infirmities, many secret falls and risings—thus it goes on. Thus the Spirit carries on His work. Thus the soul is learning more of itself and more of Jesus—more of the vileness of the one, more of the preciousness and all-sufficiency of the other. The temple is rising; and these things are but the strokes of the hammer by means of which it shall soon shine as a glorious temple. These are the chisellings of the great Architect. Often, and for a long time, the soul seems to be going backward and

not forward. Often it seems as if it hung over a spiritual precipice—as if one step more would leave it a wreck for ever. Nay, often it walks in darkness “as those that have been long dead”—the line crossed, and itself a *lost* soul! Such are the waves and the billows which roll over the soul here. But still the soul is growing. The work God has begun He is still carrying on. These are the strokes of the hammer, the chisellings of a loving hand. As we lie down to die we die in the Lord. For many a long day we had, it may be, often looked at death and shuddered. We often whispered, “How shall I endure that trying hour?” But now the Lord has provided for it. We never felt ourselves such sinners as now, but oh, how precious Jesus is! The soul hangs its head the lowest, for the sight of God’s grace and mercy and love bows it down. “I am the chief of sinners” was uttered by one who stood on the margin of glory, and who, while he *felt* his sinfulness, was full of joy in the knowledge of a Saviour’s love. They have the deepest joy who have the deepest sense of sin. If ever a Saviour was needed, if ever a Saviour was precious, it is then. It will then be a deep sense of unworthiness and sin, and a deep sense of the value of the blood of Jesus. Jesus will be precious then as He has never been before; and our last breath will be the one with which we shall wake up in glory, “Worthy the Lamb.”

Reader, are you in Jesus? Is He your Saviour

now? Have you *indeed* passed from death to life? Is it *all* right with your soul? Then let your life be the life of the righteous. Abide in Jesus. Ask God to banish all *unreality* from your spiritual life. Be real; and let that reality be the holy influence of one who has just come out of God's presence. The only living reality is that which His presence can give you. This will be testimony—the witness for God in a dying world. If you are not abiding in Jesus, if you are not much in God's secret presence, you can never witness for Him. All testimony without this may be in the letter, but not in the Spirit. It lacks the one thing which can alone give it life or power—the holy influence of God's presence. Seek this. Pray for it. With this you will have power. Without it you will be but sounding brass or tinkling cymbal.

Oh! call it not death—it is life begun,
 For the waters are pass'd, the home is won;
 The ransom'd spirit hath reach'd the shore,
 Where they weep, and suffer, and sin no more.
 She is safe in her FATHER'S house above,
 In the place prepared by her SAVIOUR'S love:
 To depart from a world of sin and strife,
 And to be with JESUS—yes,—this is *life*.

Oh! call it not death—'tis a holy sleep,
 And the precious dust the Lord doth keep;
 She shall wake again—and how satisfied
 With the likeness of Him for her who died!
 As He rose again, she shall also rise
 From the quiet bed where now safe she lies.
 Then cheer ye, fond mourners, who sadly weep,
 For happy are they who in JESUS *sleep*.

Oh ! call it not death—'tis a glorious rest,
 "Yea," saith the Spirit, for all such are blest ;
 "They rest from their labours," their work is done,
 The goal is attain'd, the weary race run.
 The battle is fought—the struggle is o'er,
 The crown now replaces the cross they bore,
 The pilgrimage path shall no more be trod—
 "A *rest* remains to the people of God."

Oh ! call it not death—it is true, indeed,
 The soul from the shackles of earth is freed ;
 'Tis true, that dissolv'd is the house of clay,
 And the spirit, unchain'd, hath pass'd away ;
 'Tis true, too, the lov'd one hath gone before,—
 The home how darken'd, that knows her no more !
 He chides not your grief, for JESUS, too, wept
 O'er the grave where His friend, a Laz'rus *slept*.

But call it not death—a few short days o'er,
 Ye shall meet her in glory, to part no more ;
 What a "blessed hope !" lo ! CHRIST shall appear
 For "the restitution of all things" here,
 Then (if not till then) ye'll see her again,
 When brought by the LORD with His glorious train,
 Those "*sleeping* in JESUS" shall be restor'd,
 "And so shall we ever be with the LORD."

E. E. H.

“ALMOST PERSUADED.”

ACTS xxvi. 28.

NOTICE how far men may go in the knowledge and reception of the truth, without being truly converted to God. Oh, reader, it is an awful thing to be like Agrippa—an “almost Christian!” To be *so like a* Christian to the natural eye, and yet to be lying under the verdict of God—“*dead in trespasses and sins.*” So like one as to “deceive the very elect,” and yet so far short as “to lose one’s own soul.” And yet this was the state of Agrippa, and is the state of multitudes around us. Who and what was the man who used these remarkable words? He was no infidel, no scoffer at religion, no despiser of God’s word, no inattentive listener to the truths of the gospel. Far otherwise. He had been brought up in the holiest religion of the day. He was familiar with the word of God, and believed what the prophets had written. He listened to the most stirring appeals of the ambassador of Christ. Surely these were evidences most remarkable, most satisfactory, most conclusive. And yet, reader, he was *never truly converted to God.* I believe there never

was a time in the history of the world when His warning was more needed than in the present day. The stream of Christianity is far broader than it used to be, but not half so deep—it is shallow. The Agrippas of Paul's day abound on every side. There are multitudes who, like him, hear the truth, *know* the truth, *believe* the truth, and are from time to time subjects of the most serious convictions, but who have, nevertheless, never been truly converted to God. Regular in attendance at the house of God, and on the various means of grace, ready to weep at the recital of Christ's sufferings, the story of Joseph and his brethren, or some narrative of persecution for the sake of the truth, and yet still unsaved. Follow these religious professors into the world. Is there any brokenness of heart for sin, any contrition of spirit at the foot of the Cross? Is there any daily realising of the preciousness of Christ? Is there any watchfulness over sin, over the world, the flesh, and the devil? Nay, in all respects they are *of* the world, and *as* the world around them. Beyond the mere Agrippa-like profession, there is nothing that distinguishes them from others. They have "a name to live, but are dead." Reader, let me affectionately ask, is this *your* state? It may be that your religion has made you outwardly moral, the member of a Christian Church, active in many of the benevolent and praiseworthy engagements of life. But has it brought you to the feet of the Saviour, as a helpless

and undone sinner, for pardon and peace? Has it made you break off one sin, or deny yourself one pleasure, or take up one self-denying cross for the sake of Christ? And if not, what has your religion done for you? As to *anything* of real value is it of any advantage? Will it give your anxious and troubled spirit any repose on a dying pillow? Does it leave in your mind no sting, no dread, no shrinking back, as you gaze into that eternal world and all its terrible realities, on the very borders of which you art sporting, and into which you may be summoned before nightfall? But you do not mean to rush into eternity as you are! You mean to prepare for it! And when is your preparation-time? In a *dying hour*—*when you see your end approaching*. Is not this the secret hope you are cherishing? Is *this* the time? When disease is wasting the frame, when pain is racking the body, and when the throbs and throes of dissolving nature are shaking the earthly tenement to its centre—is *this* a time to seek the Lord? Is this rational? That a business the most momentous of life, on which is suspended the destiny of your soul for ever and ever, and compared with which the most important concerns of this world are as nothing, can be crushed within the limits of a dying hour! Yet this is the hope you are *secretly* cherishing. Thus your life is a mockery of God. God asks you—presses you—for a *life* devoted to Him; and you are secretly, yet consciously and wilfully, putting

Him off with a few days, or, it may be, a few moments.

After the joys of earth,
After its songs of mirth,
After its hours of light,
After its dreams so bright—

What then?

Only an empty name,
Only a weary frame,
Only a conscious smart,
Only an aching heart.

After this empty name,
After this weary frame,
After this conscious smart,
After this aching heart—

What then?

Only a sad farewell
To a world loved too well,
Only a silent bed
With the forgotten dead.

After this sad farewell
To a world loved too well,
After this silent bed
With the forgotten dead—

What then?

Oh then—the Judgment throne!
Oh then—the last hope—gone!
Then, all the woes that dwell
In an eternal HELL!

After the Christian's tears,
After his fights and fears,
After his weary cross,
"All things below but loss"—

What then?

ALMOST PERSUADED.

Oh then, a holy calm,
Resting on JESU'S arm,
Oh then, a deeper love
For the pure Home above.

After this holy calm,
This rest on JESU'S arm,
After this deepened love
For the pure Home above—

What then?

Oh then—work for Him,
Perishing souls to win,
Then JESU'S presence near,
Death's darkest hour to cheer.

And when the work is done,
When the last soul is won,
When JESU'S love and power
Have cheered the dying hour—

What then?

Oh then—the Crown is given !
Oh then—rest in Heaven !
Endless life, in endless day,
Sin and sorrow pass'd away.—

E. J. A.

REST.

MICAH ii. 10.

GOD'S design is to give us *rest*. The Lord Jesus said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*." He said too, "Take My yoke, and ye shall find *rest*." This is the rest God wants us all to have, and the Holy Spirit pleads with our souls to come to Him for it. The rest the Lord gives is an inward rest—rest of conscience; rest of heart; rest of spirit. It is a blessed thing to know the Lord has pardoned our sin—that gives the conscience rest. It is a very sweet thing when a man looks up to Christ for the first time, and hears God's voice whispering to him, "Sinner, I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions." There is no rest in the wide world like this. Then a man is ready. He is not afraid to meet God when he knows He has pardoned his sins.

Arise! So long as a man is unconverted he is lying in the mire of sin and spiritual death. When he comes to Jesus he begins to *rise*. We are all spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, and the

Lord's word to us is, *Arise!* Get up out of the mire of sin, upwards to God. So, when a man rises for the first time out of unbelief and sin, he begins to walk with God. He begins to "*depart*" from iniquity. He cannot find his home, his resting-place, in sin, in neglect of prayer, in neglect of God's Word. He "*departs*" from neglecting his Saviour, and trampling His Word under foot. There is sin everywhere; get up out of it, or you will find no rest. "*Arise ye and depart;*" this is the word to us all. It is written on the grass, for you see it fading; it is written on the hearse as it goes along the street; it is written on every dying pillow—on everything in this poor world of ours. The sweetest flower on earth, before evening comes, is withered and fallen, whispering to us, "*Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted.*"

All is passing away. Every sorrow and trial is just to shake our rest, in order to make us rise higher—to look up—and find a resting-place in Christ. God is saying it to us through everything: through providences, through the trials and sorrows of life, in every day and every hour. The question is, *Do we hear God?* It is the true rest in Christ He is calling us to enjoy.

Do not build your hopes on anything beneath the sky. Build them all on the Lord Jesus. Talk to Him every day; make a friend of Him; secure an interest in Him; and then, when the world is

passing, and you are passing, you will say with St. Paul, "I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

What, though before me it is dark,
Too dark for one to see?
I ask but light for one step more,
'Tis quite enough for me.

Each little humble step I take,
The gloom clears from the next;
So, though 'tis very dark beyond,
I never am perplex'd.

And if sometimes the mist hangs close,
So close, I fear to stray,
Patient, I wait a little while,
And soon it clears away.

I would not see my further path,
For mercy veils it so;
My present steps might harder be
Did I the future know.

It may be that my path is rough,
Thorny, and hard, and steep;
And knowing this, my strength might fail
Through fear and terror deep.

It may be that it winds along
A smooth and flowery way;
But, seeing this, I might despise
The journey of *to-day*.

Perhaps my path is very short,
My journey nearly done;
And I might tremble at the thought
Of ending it so soon.

Or, if I saw a weary length
Of road that I must wend,
Fainting, I'd think, "my feeble powers
Will fail me ere the end."

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And so I do not wish to see
My journey, or its length :
Assured that, through my Father's love,
Each step will bring its strength.

Thus, step by step, I onward go,
Not looking far before ;
Trusting that I shall always have
Light for just "one step more."

"THIS IS INDEED THE CHRIST."

JOHN iv. 42.

Is there one whose conscience accuses him of a past life of forgetfulness of God, of having set His laws at defiance, abused His blessings and gifts, despised His warnings and counsels, grieved the Holy Spirit, crucified to Himself afresh the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame? Backslider, wanderer from God, whose sins rise like mountains before thee, shutting out all hope and mercy, behold the Saviour at this well. See him travelling nearly forty miles under the heat of a burning sun, to convince, pardon, and bless this sinner. He who entered Samaria's outcast city will enter thy guilty heart. He who pardoned her will pardon thee. He who filled her soul with living water will fill thine also. A Saviour's voice can still reach you. A Saviour's blood can still wash away your sins. Listen to the glad sound of welcome from one who proved it. Come, backslider, and see this Man, Christ Jesus. Come and talk with Him as she did. Come and open thy heart to Him. Come and see how gracious Christ is. Come and taste of pardon-

ing mercy, of joy unspeakable, of love passing knowledge. Come and drink of this "living water."

Is there one whose past history is defaced with deep, dark blots of sin, involving, perhaps, the ruin of his fellow-man's happiness, with crimes of deepest dye, transgressions and iniquities too gross to be mentioned, too foul for inspection, making conscience tremble, and the countenance blush—such crimes as none but Satan could suggest, and none but a Satanic spirit could accomplish? Turn, guilty one, to this well of Sychar. Say not, "There is no hope for me." Despair not, though thy past life may be scarlet and crimson-dyed with sin. There is hope for thee—even for thee. He who met this guilty sinner and revealed her life of secret sin, not to upbraid or condemn, but to have mercy and to save, will have mercy on thee. Oh, come and see this Man, Christ Jesus! Come and bathe His feet with thy tears. Come, and, alone with Him, smite upon thy breast and say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. He will heal thy backsliding. He will love thee freely. Oh, come and see! "taste and see that the Lord is gracious!"

And make haste, for time's sun is fast setting. See that God's offers of mercy be not spurned. Up! and rouse you from your sleep of carnal indifference, ere it be too late! The Saviour still lingers in mercy in the midst of this Samaritan world. Soon He may quit our shores for ever.

Soon the glad sound of redeeming love may cease to be heard in your ears. A few more breathings of this world's atmosphere, and your sun may set in darkness for ever. Oh, go not down to the grave with your work undone, and your soul unsaved! Fly to His arms of mercy, still outstretched to enfold you. Your past life has gone with all its sins to the bar of God—you cannot recall it. Your present may be hung with the drapery of sorrow and tears, and bitter reproaches. But the future—that is yours, by the help and blessing of God. Up, and seize its fleeting moments! The dark cloud may yet have its sunset of gold. The summer that is ended may yet have its redeeming tints of autumnal beauty, ere the long winter night of death has set in. Awake, then, and redeem the time! Go, wash in a Saviour's blood! Go, lay hold of the horns of the altar! Flee quickly to the city of refuge! "Look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain. Escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." "He that hath an ear, let Him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

In sin and in sorrow
Thou hast travelled along,
Thou hast loved the vain pleasures
Of the world's giddy throng,

THIS IS INDEED THE CHRIST.

Through sin and through sorrow
I have waited for thee,
I have wept and entreated,
Yet thou lovest not Me.

Thy hopes have been blighted,
They have withered and died ;
For all hope without God
Must have death by its side.
They were blighted in mercy,
That to Christ thou shouldst flee,
And be safe for eternity,
Yet thou lovest not Me.

Thy pathway through life
Has been marked with much care ;
And sickness and trials
Have been sent thee to bear ;
I sent them as warnings—
I sent them to thee,
Yet, sinner, thou knowest
Thou lovest not Me.

And the friends thou hast loved
In their beauty and bloom,
Have been snatched from thy side,
And are laid in the tomb ;
But the message has passed
Unheeded by thee ;
Thou still art unsaved,
For thou lovest not Me.

And the shadows of midnight
Are skirting the sky ;
And wrath is impending—
God's wrath from on high !
And mercy—free mercy—
Rejected by thee,
Is drawing down judgment,
Yet thou lovest not Me.

Say, wanderer, say—
Shall I leave thee alone ?
Shall I let thee go on,
As the choice is thine own ?
I have warned, I have mourned,
I have wept over thee ;
I have bled, I have died—
Yet thou lovest not Me.

Ah, come to thy Saviour !
Come, weary one, come ;
Though thy sin be as crimson,
Yet for thee there is room ;
O tarry not—linger not—
I am waiting for thee.
To save thee, to bless thee,
Though thou lovest not Me.

I ask thee for nothing—
Come just as thou art ;
Come sinful—come guilty—
Come, give me thine heart ;
The fountain is open,—
It is open to thee ;
Let thy Saviour *not* say—
Thou lovest not Me.

—F. WHITFIELD.

THE GRACE OF GOD.

TITUS ii. 11.

OBSERVE, "the grace of God *bringeth* salvation." Grace always *brings* its blessings to the soul. It never says, "Try and *reach* them." That would be *law*, not *grace*. Grace comes down to the lost one with a full hand. It never says, Come up to me, and I will give you salvation. Grace sees us without feet to walk, and without hands to take it. To tell us to come up would be but mockery. No, it comes to us, and *brings* salvation. It comes like a letter with our own name written upon it. It says, "This is yours. Open your eyes and read your name. It is all yours—yours *now*; yours, the purchase of my blood; yours without *one* condition. This is *grace*. This is the way grace 'bringeth salvation.'" Human religion and human teachers bring it before the soul very differently from the way in which grace brings it. They tell you to try and get it. They tell you you must be *better*, have a better faith, better prayers, or a better character. Thus they do not *bring* it. They tell you to *get* it. Oh, how all this is opposed to the

Bible! Grace *says* nothing to you. It simply *sees* you from afar—sees you in all your unbelief and wretchedness and sin, and *comes to you*, “bringing salvation.” It says, “Son, thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace.” It says not, “they *shall* be:” it says they “*are* forgiven.” This is grace. It is so God-like that grace coming to the soul in this way is called “the grace of God.” It always “*bringeth*” salvation.

But mark—“*bringeth* salvation.” It is not a *past* act. It is not something done eighteen hundred years ago. It is a *present* thing. The Holy Spirit “bringeth” it *now*. He is always bringing it, and will bring it, till there be no more needy souls to bring it to. He “bringeth salvation.” What glorious words! How they *exactly* meet the sinner’s case. How God-like it all is! Who would not be happy? Who would not rise up and “go in peace?” Who would not sing praises to our God for such “grace,” such “salvation”?

But it is salvation from what? From everything against you. You are a *sinner*. As a sinner the *wrath of God* is against you, the law is against you, conscience is against you, everything is against you. Salvation is a full removal of everything against you. Not only so, but it turns them all in your favour. The wrath of God is gone, and His love is yours. The law is fulfilled for you. Sin has been put away and the righteousness of God is yours. Heaven is yours, Christ is yours—“all

things are yours." All this "grace bringeth" to you now—as you are—a sinner. Your only plea, your only title, a needy, helpless sinner. What a glorious message the Gospel is! Well may it be the motive to holiness and the ground of all our exhortations! Sinner, see it all thine! Oh, taste and see that the Lord is gracious!

Mark the *result* of this salvation—"teaching us." It puts the soul in the place of a *learner* and the Holy Spirit as its *teacher*. You are now a little child. You know nothing. You feel you know nothing. You come, all ignorant and blind, to sit at the feet of Jesus. The deep feeling of your heart is, "what a poor foolish creature I am!" Your cry is, "Lord, teach me!" The soul is now dealing with great and holy things; and everything in the heart and in the life looks so wretchedly small by the side of them. The man finds he can take in so little, and of the little he does take in he keeps so little, and he gives out so little. A stunted, dwarfish, shut-up feeling so oppresses him, he seems as if he never *did* grow, and never *will* grow, and never *could* grow. His prayers are little, and everything about him is little. He feels—oh, how deeply!—"Lord, I am but a little child; I know not how to go out, or how to come in." Yes, this is the very first effect of "the grace of God which bringeth salvation." It puts you at the feet of Jesus as a little child, and it *keeps* you there, ever looking up to the Lord to be taught.

Return, O thou roving heart,
Back from the tumult strife ;
Back from the road to death,
Back to Eternal Life !
Jesus thy Saviour lives,
Still pleading for thee—
“Come back from thy wanderings,
Lost one, to me.”

Rest, O thou weary heart,
From all thy fears,
From sin's “vile slavery”
And earth's hot tears.
Calm, in the arms of God ;
Soft, on thy Saviour's breast ;
Safe, near the mighty Lord,—
Take now thy rest.

Peace, O thou throbbing heart !
Bid thy doubts cease ;
God, the offended, cries,
“Let there be peace !”
Jesus the crucified
Suffered for thee ;
Soul, thou art justified !
Sinner, thou'rt free !

Life ! O thou panting heart,
Speed, speed thy wings !
Heed not the touch of death,—
It loosens their strings.
Fly past earth's boundaries :
Farewell frail breath !
Life bursts upon thine eyes ;
No more of death !

—FLORENCE TUCKER.

PEACE AND TRUST.

"PEACE with God" is a blessing to be enjoyed by every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It will be well, carefully to examine our relationship with God. If it be that of *true* peace with Him, it will bear examination; it will never be shaken, but rather strengthened by it. But if we are resting on anything else than true Gospel peace, the sooner we find out our mistake, the better.

Very many live in a false peace, a *peace with their own consciences*, but not "with God." This arises from the absence of real conviction of sin. They feel no apprehensions about judgment to come, and so imagine that they have "peace with God." Or else, if they are satisfied with their own good works, they think that all is well.

"Peace with God" is not a mere *feeling* in the heart. Our feelings ever vary. Sometimes they may be very bright, and at other times less so. But such variations of inward feeling do not affect the believer's "peace with God."

This peace is a reality on God's side. It is the settlement of the great question of sin between God

and man. His justice against sin has been visited upon the Lord Jesus Christ. He has so satisfied its claims upon the sinner, that it makes no further demands upon the soul that trusts in Jesus.

Simple faith accepts God's Word on this subject as absolutely true, and rests in the knowledge of this peace.

Moreover, the believer's "peace with God" is absolutely perfect, and should be enjoyed as such by us. Strong faith adds nothing to it; weak faith takes nothing from it. It was made by the Lord Jesus Christ, through the shedding of His precious blood. All that faith can do is to rest upon it and enjoy it.

Some imagine their peace imperfect because they cannot realise the full value of the blood of Christ. But "peace with God" does not rest upon our own appreciation of this. It is enough to know that God is able to estimate to the full the value of the blood-shedding of His own dear Son. Our peace depends upon God's knowledge of its value, and not upon ours. Our knowledge is imperfect, and is no ground for peace. But faith just rests upon His Word, and has peace with Him.

This "peace with God" is no high Christian attainment; it is the starting-point of the new life, the privilege of the weakest believer. It is not the result of long and weary effort, but a blessed condition into which the believer enters the very moment he trusts in Jesus. He knows then that

Christ died for his sins, and suffered his condemnation, leaving nothing of it for him to suffer. This is "peace with God"—guilt taken away, condemnation removed, sin forgiven.

Yield yourself and all your affairs up into the hands of the Lord, to have His holy will done in everything. Then believe that He takes you, and that He undertakes to keep, and save, and deliver you. And then trust Him. All is hidden in these two little words, TRUST JESUS. When you have reached the point where you can really trust Him with everything, and for everything, you have reached the land of rest. But remember that trust and worry do not go together. If you worry, you do not trust. If you trust, you will not worry. Perfect trust in Jesus will bring the soul out of every difficulty that was ever thought of. Trust in Jesus will carry you along triumphantly through every step of your Christian experience; and will make you more than conqueror over all the enemies you may meet. If I were about to speak my last word to you for ever, it would be only this, TRUST JESUS.

Thy lesson art thou learning,
O tried and weary soul?
His ways art thou discerning
Who works to make thee whole?
In the haven of submission,
Art thou satisfied and still?
Art thou clinging to the Father
'Neath the Shadow of His will?

Now, while His arms enfold thee,
Think well, He loveth best ;
Be still, and He shall mould thee
For His heritage of rest.

The vessel must be shapen
For the joys of Paradise ;
The soul must have her training
For the service of the skies ;
And if the great Refiner,
In furnaces of pain,
Would do His work more truly,
Count all His dealings gain.
For He Himself hath told thee
Of tribulation here ;
Be still, and let Him mould thee
For changeless glory *there*.

From vintages of sorrow
Are deepest joys distilled,
And the cup outstretched for healing
Is oft at Marah filled ;
God leads to joy through weeping,
To quietness through strife,
Through yielding unto conquest,
Through death to endless life.
Be still ; He hath enrolled thee
For the kingdom and the crown :
Be silent ; let Him mould thee
Who calleth thee His own.

Such silence is communion,
Such stillness is a shrine,
The "fellowship of suffering"
An ordinance Divine,
And the secrets of "abiding"
Most fully are declared
To those who with the Master
Gethsemane have shared.

PEACE AND TRUST.

Then trust Him to uphold thee
'Mid the shadows and the gloom ;
Be still, and He shall mould thee
For His presence and for Home.

For resurrection-stillness
There is resurrection-power,
And the prayer and praise of trusting
May glorify each hour ;
And common days are holy,
And years an Easter-tide,
For those who with the Risen One
In risen life abide !
Then let His true love fold thee,
Keep silence at His word :
Be still, and He shall mould thee,—
Oh, rest thee in the Lord.
—*Chimes for Daily Service.*

THE LORD'S MESSAGE TO HIS CHURCH.

CANT. ii. 13.

THE endearing terms applied by the Lord to His people here is instructive—*Rise up, my love, my fair one.* He says “love” *first*. He could not have said “my *fair* one” unless He had *first* said “my *love*.” “He *loved* us and gave Himself for us” *first*. Then, having washed all our sins away, we became “fair”—we were “accepted in the beloved.” We became then as *Christ Himself* before God. God looks at us in Jesus. And looked at *only in Jesus*, what other language *could* He use, sinners though we are, than this, “thou art *all* fair, my love; there is *no spot* in thee.” Precious Jesus! What guilty creatures *we* are! What wondrous love is Thine!

Reader, dost thou shrink back and exclaim, “This is too great!” Too great for *Him*? Away with such narrow-souled, contracted views of thy Saviour and His love! He is a *great* Saviour, and a *great* gift becomes Him. Thou wouldst lessen its greatness by thy narrow thoughts of it. Give thy Saviour credit for generosity. Give Him credit for a generous gift, a *great* gift, worthy of Himself, even salvation

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to *thee*, just as thou art, in all thy sin. This is worthy of Him. If thy thoughts, or thy faith, or thy prayers, or thy deeds could do anything to merit that gift, would not the greatness of it be lessened, and also the generosity of the Giver? What would awaken in the breast of a criminal feelings of devotion and gratitude to his king? A *free, undeserved pardon*. This would be a *generous* gift. What if the criminal should say, "It will place me under too great a debt to the king's goodness. I will do something to *earn* it, so that I shall not feel under so great an obligation?" Would not this be *pride*? Would not this make the king less a *giver*, and the criminal more an *earner*? Would not this lessen the greatness of the king's *gift*, reduce the idea of his *generosity*, and make any feelings of gratitude or devotion in the criminal's bosom *less intense*? Ah, sinner, see in this picture thyself! What a generous gift Christ offers thee—salvation *now*, just as thou art! What a noble gift! How worthy of Him! How will this waken feelings of devotion and love to Him for such a gift to thee! But what art thou saying? "It is too great, too good, I cannot believe it." Oh, take this generous gift from a generous Giver, and let thy thoughts of Him be great—thoughts of such love, such mercy, such grace, such goodness! Dismiss for ever the dishonouring idea of making yourself *more worthy*, and thus making it less a gift on God's part to you, and making you more proud in the thought that

you have *earned it*. Salvation is a great gift worthy of a great Saviour. Take this gift; take it *now*; take it as a guilty sinner; take it and glorify Him for such wondrous love to thee! Take it, sinner, a great and generous gift from a great and gracious Saviour. Then wilt thou hear His voice to thee, though a sinner, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." His will be throughout eternity the praise, and thine the rejoicing.

But mark the Lord's exhortation, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." "Rise up" out of sloth and slumber. "It is high time we should awake out of sleep." "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." "Arise ye, and *depart*, for this is not your rest; it is polluted." "Rise up" out of sloth and slumber and sleep, and be wakeful, watchful, vigilant. "Rise up" to *Him* in everything you have to do. Rise daily from self and sin, nearer and nearer to Him. "Onward and upward, heavenward and homeward," be this your motto and your aim through life.

"Jesus I wait." Last words breathed soft and low,
From dying lips grown tremulous and faint.
O great Life-giver, Thou didst surely know
The yearnings of Thy saint.

Waiting a moment only—just a pause,
A hush before the music had begun,
A silence ere the cloudy veil withdraws
And the bright home is won.

"Jesus I wait." Was He not waiting too
With hands outstretched in welcome, and with eyes
Brimful of love to guide His servant through
The gates of Paradise?

O calm safe rest ; all sorrows passed away,
Like twilight mists before a risen moon.
O blessed close to life's most weary day.
O peace attained so soon.

Teach us to live, and living wait for Thee,
Redeemer—making life and labour sweet,
Watching and working till our eyes shall see
The face they long to greet.

Our highest earthly bliss to do Thy will,
Our hope, the promise of Thy great reward,
Our effort, all Thy purpose to fulfil
And magnify the Lord.

Teach us to wait—as waits the ripened corn
In golden fulness for the reaper's hand,
Meet for Thy garner when the harvest morn
Dawns o'er the weary land.

And Thou wilt come with radiant angel train,
Lord of the harvest, claiming all Thine own ;
Then shall we greet our dearest ones again,
And know as we are known.

Then shall the endless festival begin,
And the long waiting as a dream go past ;
For love triumphant over death and sin
Shall reign supreme at last.

“ALONE WITH JESUS.”

JOHN viii. 1-11.

THE sinner and Jesus were left alone. They must always be so. None should come in there, specially where *sin* is the question to be settled. There is no place there for priest or minister, friend or relative, rite or ritual, sect or system. All must go out, and the sinner be left alone with his great High Priest and Saviour. So long as the scribes and Pharisees remained there was not a word passed from the lips of the Saviour to her, nor from her lips to Him. When all had gone out, He spoke to her. Not till then. Sinner, learn the lesson. Nothing must stand between thy soul and the Saviour—no priest, or saint, or friend, however dear. Till they are *all* gone out thou wilt never hear thy Saviour's voice speaking to thy soul. He is thy Saviour, and *only* He. All must go out, and thou be *alone* with Him. Not till then wilt thou hear His voice saying to thy troubled soul, “Neither do I condemn thee.” Let them all go out, then, “one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last;” beginning with the priest,

and ending with "the last" thing thy soul is clinging to, whatever it may be. Let all go, and listen to His voice only. Listen, sinner, and rejoice. Listen, and press closer to the arms of redeeming love. Listen, while the Spirit of God re-echoes in thine ear the words which set this poor soul free, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."

What a glorious discharge for this poor trembling one! The law thundered, Satan charged, conscience accused, man pointed the finger of scorn. What of it? Above them all she heard the voice of God proclaiming, "Neither do I condemn thee." She could look them all in the face, for God had looked upon *her*. She could face every frown, and tremble not, for heaven's sunshine had fallen upon her stricken soul in the smile of Jesus. The storm that raged within had subsided, for He who ruled the winds and the waves had uttered His voice, and now there was a great calm.

And mark the order—pardon first, then obedience. This is God's order. Human religion exactly reverses it. It says, "Go, and sin no more, and *then* you may hope to be forgiven." It puts the sinner *altogether* off the work of Christ for pardon, and places him on his doings for it. It puts something between the soul and the finished work of Jesus; and no matter what that may be, it is a reversal of God's order, and keeps it from peace. God's way is *first* to pardon, and then to enjoin

obedience. And why? Because man can do nothing in this world without a motive. And the more powerful the motive in the soul, the more effectually will the work be done. So it is here. Man cannot abstain from sin and be holy without a motive for doing so. And therefore to tell him *first* to "go and sin no more," would be folly. You must have the motive first. What is that motive? The love of God shed abroad in his own soul. Christ has forgiven him while yet a sinner; and this free, unmerited grace to one so unworthy is the great motive constraining him to holiness of life. Oh that men would see the *wisdom* of this! Oh that all professors of religion knew the great yet simple way of becoming truly happy as well as holy! This is "heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan." Let the Spirit of God show that pardon to the soul *first* in the finished work of the Lord Jesus, and holiness will surely be the result.

Alone with Jesus! What a sweet and holy spot! What a blessed refuge to which the soul may betake itself from the charges of Satan, the accusations of the world, and the sorrows of life! Sweet spot for the heart to unfold itself in the ear of infinite love, tenderness, and compassion! Precious as is the mother's bosom to her child, how much more the bosom of Jesus! There the self-condemned and the penitent may bathe His feet with tears. There the aching heart, stung with the scorn and reproaches of the world, may find sweet repose.

Thrice blessed and holy spot! What could the child of sorrow do without it? It is the one green spot in the desert. It is the refreshing spring when all around is dreariness and desolation. This world of ours is full of bleeding hearts. No eye sees them. They are shut up, carried, alas! under a deceitful exterior. Sunlight playing on the countenance, but the bitterness of sorrow underneath; the surface all radiant with smiles, the centre all dark with grief. Oh, who can estimate the privilege of being "alone with Jesus!" There God reveals His smiling face on every blood-bought child. There he gets sympathy—oh, *what* sympathy! There he obtains strength for every hour of need. There he learns more of himself and his own weakness, and more of the preciousness and all-sufficiency of Christ. There sin is confessed, iniquity acknowledged, motives are sifted, actions weighed, conscience examined, and the soul grows.

No—not alone! not in the wilderness,
Where the dark shadows lie,
Where the very air has a shivering thrill
As of a parting sigh;
Something dropped out of life,
Leaving it grey and chill—
A ray of its sunshine dark,
A tone of its music still.

Still—not alone! My Lord, my Life is near—
The shining of His face
Can touch the cold grey shadows into light,
E'en in a desert place.

I lay my hand in His,
Through all the roughen'd way—
I lean my heart on His,
Through all the dreary day.

No—not alone ! not in the silent night,
Weary with throbs of pain,
And heavy with pressure of fevered thoughts
Weighing on heart and brain.
Does He not watch with me ?
Can I not hear His voice,
Nearer and dearer than all of earth,
Bidding my heart rejoice ?

No—not alone ! Is there no other voice
Far off, I know not where,
Of one who weeps and prays—hot tears like mine—
Can I not hear the prayer ?
Pale lips, that softly say,
“Father, it is Thy will ;”
Meek hands, that bear the cross,
Folded in patience still,—

Are ye not one with me,
One in our deep true love,
One in the hope we “see not yet”
Of rest and light above ?
We are watching through the night,
Veil'd from each other's ken—
But the morning light is fair and sweet,
We shall know each other then !

"H E A L E D."

MARK V. 27-29.

SHE came to Jesus. There was much in her thoughts about Him that was wrong and dishonouring. She did not know Him fully, but the Spirit of God was leading her step by step. She felt her disease, she felt her need. She was poor and helpless, and in this state she came. Grace meets us not according to our correct views, or right thoughts of God, but according to our *need*. Alas! if it demanded right thoughts and correct views of His character, where should we be—where would this woman have been? If dishonouring thoughts of His love, ignorance of His character, blindness in seeing what He requires were hindrances to His grace, she must have gone back to her home again, and remained a cripple for life. But, blessed be His holy name, it is not so. Grace is measured by no standard but the poverty and need of the sinner. Ignorance, blindness, and sin are no barriers to His grace. Nay, these are the things that call it forth. It is because we are such that grace meets us, welcomes us, saves us. The

enlightening of the understanding as to the Saviour's true character comes afterwards. We come as beggars to the gate of heaven, as prodigals from the far country, and are embraced, clothed, and fed. So she came. She touched the Saviour's hem, and "immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up." What she had sought for twelve long years from the world's physicians and sought in vain, she got by a single touch of Jesus. How quickly He can heal the soul! We go to Him in our poverty and sin, in our sorrow and trial, and oh, what a Saviour we find Him! We get by a single touch of Him what the world could never give. How hollow are all the world's physicians when viewed in His light! How fully every want of the soul is met! What a mighty power there is in a touch, a word, a look from Him! One *look* brought a backsliding Apostle home to the fold. One *word* dried the tears of a weeping Magdalene, and filled her desolate heart with deep songs of joy. One *touch* of His clothes dried up the fountain of disease in this helpless cripple, and sent her to her home rejoicing. Precious Jesus! Who is like unto Thee? The poor, the penniless, the outcast, the diseased, the needy and helpless sons and daughters of sorrow and woe, ever repaired to Thy outstretched arms for mercy, and found it. Under thy sheltering wings they reposed in safety, driven by the blasts and tempests of a heaving world. Thou hast been "the hiding-place from the wind, the covert

from the tempest ; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Blessed Jesus ! who is like unto Thee ?

What had she got from Jesus ? Just as much as she needed. No more. For this cause He came into our world—to meet man's *need*. He is the same to this hour. Christian, what do you get from the Saviour now ? Just what you *need*. There are no dealings now between the Saviour and His people beyond this. Every approach to Him is founded on this. Every answer to prayer is according to this measure. Every blessing we receive corresponds with the need that it meets. Alas, then, for the soul that has never *felt its need* of Him ! It can receive nothing. There is no point of contact between that soul and Christ. There is no link uniting it to heaven. It is an alien, an outcast, a wandering star, "having no hope, and without God in the world." Reader, are *you* such a one ?

Christian, seek to feel more deeply your need of that precious Saviour. Let your prayer ever be, "Lord, deepen the vessel, that it may receive more of Thy fulness. Nothing brings you so close to Him as these hidden needs. These are the most precious points of contact in your earthly history. These make the Saviour precious. These tell us something of *what* a Saviour He is. These are the channels through which His virtue flows. It is Him you want, to meet every need—none but

Jesus. In the solitude or the throng, in the routine of daily duty or the calmness of the closet, in sickness or in health, in sorrow or in joy, in living or in dying, let your heart be filled with one desire, one thought, one aim—to *touch Jesus*. This one thought filled this woman's soul to the exclusion of every other from the very moment the name of Jesus sounded in her ears. All else seemed as nothing in comparison. Reader, may her history be yours and mine !

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,”
Thoughtlessly the maiden sung.
Fell the words unconsciously
From her girlish, gleeful tongue ;
Sang as little children sing,
Sang as sing the bird's in June ;
Fell the words like light leaves down
On the current of the tune—
“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

“Let me hide myself in Thee ;”
Felt her soul no need to hide ;
Sweet the song as song could be—
And she had no thought beside.
All these words unheedingly
Fell from lips untouched by care,
Dreaming not that each might be
On some other lips a prayer :—
“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me ;”
’Twas a woman sung them now,
Pleadingly and prayerfully ;
Every word her heart did know.

Rose the song as storm-tossed bird
Beats with weary wing the air,
Every note with sorrow stirred—
Every syllable a prayer :—
“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me ;”
Lips grown aged sung the hymn
Trustingly and tenderly—
Voice grown weak and eyes grown dim,
“Let me hide myself in Thee.”—
Trembling though the voice and low,
Ran the sweet strain peacefully,
Like a river in its flow—
Sung, as only they can sing,
Who life's thorny paths have pressed ;
Sung, as only they can sing,
Who behold the promised rest :
“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,”
Sung above a coffin lid ;
Underneath, all restfully,
All life's joys and sorrows hid.
Never more, O storm-tossed soul !
Never more from wind or tide,
Never more from billow's roll,
Wilt thou need thyself to hide.
Could the sightless, sunken eyes,
Closed beneath the soft grey hair,
Could the mute and stiffened lips
Move again in pleading prayer,
Still, aye, still the words would be,
“Let me hide myself in Thee.”

THE STONY GROUND.

MARK iv. 5-6.

How many are there in the world of this class? There is much about them, like the earth, that is good; much that appears to bear the stamp of Divine grace. We see an amiable temper, a sweet natural disposition, a love of good things. This is the *earth*. Education has produced it, not the Spirit of God. Association with the good has left its impress on the natural character. There are warm feelings, easily excited to tears under the sound of the Gospel. There is an earnest start made on the heavenward road. We are arrested, and secretly thank God that another wanderer has been gathered so quickly to the fold. Ah! this is the *earth*. This is nature all the while, not the Spirit. This is "the gourd that springs up in a night," not "the tree planted by the rivers of water." Beneath the gilding, so lovely and attractive, there is concealed the stone. *This* is the true character of the heart, not the beautiful exterior. It is the "stony heart" still—the old heart under a new covering.

And what is another phase of the stony heart? The seed falls and springs up quickly, but cannot take root, because of the hidden stone that hinders it. So is it with many. The seed falls, but what hinders it from taking root? Some stone of secret sin lodged in the heart. See that noble ship riding on the waves. Her yards are right, her canvas is spread, and there is a favourable breeze. Why sails she not out of the harbour? Why heaves she so restlessly on the waters? Down deep in the water, and concealed from every eye, is the anchor. This holds her fast. What avail favouring tides and breezes? Nothing whatever. Cut off the anchor, and then, with God's breath helping her, she may move on. So is it with many a soul. There they are from year to year, and never move one step heavenward. The same in youth, the same in manhood, the same in hoar hairs. Why are they not in the race? Why still lagging behind in the world of sin and death? Ah, down deep in the muddy streams of the deceitful heart there lies the anchor of secret sin, holding fast the noble vessel that should be freighted with God's glory and on its way to Canaan. What avail the favouring gales of God's Spirit, ministers and preachers at the helm, and calm seas of Gospel invitations and encouragements, in which it may be wafted to glory? Nothing whatever. There is the secret lust the heart cannot renounce, some grasping covetousness it cannot give up, some car-

nal affection it cannot mortify, or some inveterate habit it is unwilling to overcome. These are the anchors holding down the vessel. These are the stones in many a heart. Man may not see them, they are so concealed under the plausible exterior; but God does. There they are, and there they have been for many a year, the closed door to God's truth ever entering in.

And what may we learn from the "*immediate*" springing up of the seed? It teaches that God requires *depth* in our religion. It should grow where man sees it not. It should be casting its roots within the vail. On what depends the strength, the beauty, and the fruit of the tree? On its hidden roots. So with the Christian. What he is outwardly will depend on his hidden life before God. This is what we want now. The age we live in is a very superficial one. We live in a day when men can be Christians one day, and anything the next; when men can talk of the deep things of God in one breath, and the things of the world in the next; when the great aim of the many is just to save their character; to go with the worldling or the infidel up to that point. To advance beyond would stake their Christian *reputation*, otherwise they would soon do even that. It is an easy, indulgent, self-loving, half-hearted Christianity that surrounds us. The religion of the many lacks depth. It is in the head and on the tongue, far more than in the heart. It *speaks* too loud; it *tells* too little. There is the face of Moses, but not

P

the shining of God's presence in it. The world looks on and says nothing but ponders deeply. It is keen to notice a flaw in one of God's people. It can see a blot there sooner than anywhere else. It has a place in the memory for *that*, when memory is very bad. Oh, we want more depth. We want to be more in God's presence. We want more decision for Christ. Reader, see to it that your testimony before the world is clear and unequivocal. The Lord is coming, and will soon be here. Live as you would live if He were to come before nightfall. Beware, I beseech you, of a superficial religion, a divided heart for God.

There is a time we know not when,
A point we know not where,
That marks the destiny of men
To Glory or despair.

There is *a line* by us unseen
That crosses every path,
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath.

To pass that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth;
It does not *quench* the beaming eye
Or pale the glow of health.

The conscience may be still at ease,
The spirits light and gay,
That which is pleasing still may please,
And care be thrust away;

But on that forehead God *has* set
Indelibly *a mark*,
Unseen by man, for man as yet
Is blind and in the dark.

And yet the doomed one's path below,
Like Eden may have bloomed ;
He did not, does not, will not know,
Or feel that he is doomed !

"He knows," "he feels" that all is well,
And every fear is calmed ;
He lives, he dies, he wakes *in hell*,
Not only doomed but damned.

Oh ! where is the mysterious bourne,
By which our path is crossed,
Beyond which God Himself *hath* sworn,
That he who goes *is lost* !

How far may we go on in sin ?
How long will God forbear ?
Where does hope end ? and where begin
The confines of despair ?

An answer from the skies is sent,
Ye that from God depart,
While it is called "To-day" *Repent*,
And harden not your heart.

THREE SOLEMN WORDS.

PSALM xxxii. 5, 6; lxxvii. 19; xxxvii. 23.

PSALM xxxii. 5, 6.—My first word is about sin. Let us remember that the mere mention of the fact of sin before God does not constitute confession. It is nothing for us to mention what He well knows. But true confession implies our viewing sin in the light in which God views it. We may go to God and rehearse the whole catalogue of our misdeeds, but we may as well spare our breath if we do not acknowledge the *guilt* of the acts as well as the acts themselves. God will have the confession from your own heart that you are a transgressor at every point, that every defence is broken down, and that you are *without excuse*. And remember, the only blessing lies in *God's assured forgiveness of sin*. Man is not blessed who *forgets* his sins, or who *blinds himself* to them, or who can *divert his mind* from them, or who can temporarily *escape their consequences*. "Blessed is he," and *only* he, "whose transgression is *forgiven*." And remember, again, there is "a time when He may be found," which solemnly implies that there are times when

He may *not* be found. Have you not frequently known cases where, though something you much desired to find was in its right place, yet, through some forgetfulness, or confusion, or carelessness on your part, you could not find it? *You had incapacitated yourself for finding what was so near to you.* So a man may long resist God's Spirit until he have no disposition to seek to repent or confess. God has promised *pardon on penitence*, but has He promised *penitence on sin*? It is not safe to struggle away from the pressure of God's hand. It is not safe to let those moments slip by when God seems so near. It is better to uncover the sin at once. When sin is *uncovered* God is *discovered*. The hiding of sin is the hiding away of God.

Psalm lxxvii. 19.—My second word is about God's *way*. Let us remember that God's way is in the *sea*—marked by mystery and darkness, beset with hard problems. Look at your own life and say if it has not been as a way in the sea. He is a wise man indeed among us who can go back and explain his life. Enwrapped in each separate manhood is a mystery of Providence deeper far than any that the sea holds in its bosom. Child of God, do you know how you became what you are to-day? How is it you are something different from what you *meant* to be? Or do you know why you were led to it by a road so different from that which you chose? Do you understand why God put certain responsibilities upon you, the very ones from which

you shrank? Or why, on the other hand, He has assigned to others the duties you so coveted? Do you know why your goal of earthly good is still below the horizon, and why God keeps you plodding along the road? He has smitten you where you thought you did not deserve it. He has taken from you the earthly help you seemed to need most. He has let *seven* troubles come together when you thought you had your hands full with *one*. You believe God has led you, and yet "His footsteps are not known." It was a curious way of bringing Israel into Egypt by bereaving Jacob. It was a strange beginning of their wonderful emigration—the finding of a Hebrew baby in the Nile rushes. The sheepfold was a strange place in which to look for a King, and a ruddy shepherd-lad a singular candidate for royalty. Ah, mystery is everywhere! Over each life this superscription is written: "Thy way is in the sea, Thy paths in the mighty waters, and Thy footsteps are not known."

Psalm xxxvii. 23.—My third word is about the *steps of God's child*. We have been watching the course of a man in God's way—a traveller who has been long in coming to the end. To the eye of reason it seems as though the man had been walking *aimlessly*; as though his life, with its continual interruption, and confusion, and stumbling, and baffling, were an utter, irredeemable failure. There have come times to most of us when we have lost out of our lives all sense of plan or order, and have just

gone on from day to day, doing and taking what the day brought with it. We have thought that these were *disordered* periods. Indeed they were not! Did you ever study the waves of the ocean? If so, you have noticed that each wave was full of little irregular swirlings and eddies, moving in all possible directions. If you could fasten your eyes upon a square foot of that water, and shut out all the rest, it would seem a mere watery chaos. But if your eye takes in the whole wave, you see a common movement propels its whole mass, and takes up into itself all the minor movements, and bears them on with the regularity of a marching host. So with these spaces of confusion in our lives. They are carried on in the larger order of God's plan. We cannot see the whole movement, but it bears steadily and continuously onward. Every incident, every crossing and confusion of incidents, are all swept on at God's own rate, and in beautiful adjustment with God's own plan. There is *no* disorder in the life of the man who walks in God's own way. "The steps of a good man are *ordered* by the Lord, and he *delighteth* in His way."

The dove that far away might roam
Throughout the day,
At eventide made straight for home
Without delay.

So, Lord, though oft I Thee forget
In hours of light,
Yet, towards Thine Ark my course is set
At thought of night.

THREE SOLEMN WORDS.

I feel so weary and distrest
 Apart from Thee ;
Like a tired child, I long for rest ;
 Lord, pity me !

Worn out with conflict, toil, and sin ;
 Too weak to fly ;
Put forth Thine hand and take me in,
 Or I must die.

Thou wilt not chide Thy wandering dove
 That seeks Thee still,
But wilt enfold me in Thy love,
 Secure from ill.

The world looks desolate to me,
 The night is dark ;
But I am happy close to Thee
 Within Thine Ark.

THE SOUL'S DESIRE.

PSALM xxvii. 4.

AND such is the believer's desire still,—“that I may *dwell* in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” Not a passing visit; not an occasional interview. No; but a constant realising of His blessed presence. And for what purpose?—“to behold the beauty of the Lord.” Oh, what beauty there is in Jesus to the soul that knows Him! How “altogether lovely!” What so precious as He! If we only fix our eyes on Him the heart must be riveted; for He is “the chief of ten thousand, the altogether lovely.” Oh, may we see fresh beauty in Him! such beauty as will draw us away from all else beneath the sun; such beauty as will never cause the eye to tire, the heart to grow weary, or the lips to falter! Lord, shine upon us, and cause the brightness of thy countenance to eclipse every other object!

And observe the effect of thus seeing beauty in Jesus. “To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.” “To *inquire*”—to *seek*

with God; to hold communion with Him. True prayer is ever the effect of seeing Jesus. All true worship flows from seeing Jesus. It is His beauty shining on the soul, and opening the heart and lips to speak to Him. Then we *must* speak. We cannot help speaking. It is no sense of duty; it is the soul's breathing. This is true worship. The *form* is nothing; it is seeing Jesus. The absence of form is nothing; it is seeing Jesus. All is spiritual worship where He is seen; all is form where His beauty is not seen. Lord, give each one of us this, for Thy sake!

And mark the security of God's people: "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me." In the king's pavilion is complete security from attack, come from whatever quarter it may. Such is the Lord to all His people. And observe, "He shall *hide* me;" He shall put me in a place where trouble cannot find me out. Though *surrounded* by troubles and trials, yet shall there be a "secret" place where they cannot come, even the "secret of His tabernacle." It is darkness outside, but there is light there. It is sorrow outside, but there is joy there. The soul is conscious that a rock is beneath it, even the Rock of Ages. From that eminence it can, yea, it does, look down and see wave after wave roll angrily at its feet. He trembles at their fury, and feels how impotent he is. He feels that but for the Rock beneath him he too

must sink like lead in the mighty waters. Yet is he safe, for he is in Christ.

Reader, get your feet on that Rock, and you will be safe. However bright your sky may be now, you will one day have your clouds and storms and tempests. Sorrow is the heritage of man, and sooner or later it is the portion of all. Oh, to have to breast the wind and brave the flood without a "pavilion," or a "secret place in the tabernacle," is terrible! To be in the waves without the Rock of Ages beneath you, is sad indeed. Now, while the sky is without its dark clouds, and your sea has no breakers dashing rudely upon its shore, come to Jesus. Come to Him who is the light and salvation of the needy and helpless and lost, and who will be the strength of your life, in all your hours of weakness. Why should you let the cloudy and dark day overtake you without Him? Why should you turn your back on peace and joy, on true pleasure and happiness? Why should you allow Satan to lead you captive at his will when the joy of the Lord may be your portion for ever? Come to Jesus now. Break through the hindrances that are surrounding you. Burst the spell by which your soul is led captive. Accept His finished work for your everlasting salvation. Ask the Lord to enable you to receive it as yours. Ask that the light may shine more brightly upon your soul, making you feel your deeper need of Jesus, and for that faith to look simply at the cross,

and see your salvation freely, fully, and everlastingly accomplished. Come to Jesus, and live. Come to Jesus, and be happy. Come to Jesus, and find rest for your soul.

I'll not leave Jesus—never, never !
Ah what can more precious be ?
Rest and joy and light are ever
In His hand to give to me.
All things that can satisfy,
Having Jesus, those have I.

Love has bound me fast unto Him,
I am His and He is mine ;
Daily I for pardon sue Him,
Answers He with peace divine.
On that Rock my trust is laid,
And I rest beneath its shade.

Without Jesus, earth would weary,
Seem almost like hell to be ;
But if Jesus I see near me,
Earth is almost heaven to me.
Am I hungry ? He doth give
Bread on which my soul can live.

Spent with Him, one little hour
Giveth endless worth of gain ;
Grace and peace put forth their power,
Joy doth wholly banish pain ;
One faith-glance that findeth Him,
Maketh earthly crowns look dim.

Oh how light upon my shoulder
Lies my cross, now grown so small ;
For the Lord is my upholder,
Fits it to me, softens all ;
Neither shall it always stay,—
Patience, it will pass away.

Now He leads me wonderfully,
Right and left, through sun and rain ;
Yet I know, and trust Him truly,
It is always for my gain.
Yes, His wonder-road indeed,
Always heavenward doth lead.

Those who faithfully go forward,
In His changeless care shall go ;
Nothing's doubtful or untoward
To the flock who Jesus know.
Jesus always is the same ;
True and faithful is His name.

Blinded world ! if ye admire
Earthly trifles, ye are free !
Out of Jesus my desire
Never shall contented be :
I have sworn it in my heart,
I from Jesus will not part.

PRECIOUS JESUS! MAY THINE OWN IMAGE FILL MY
SOUL TO THE EXCLUSION OF EVERY OTHER. ALL HEAVEN
IS WHERE THOU ART. ALL GOD'S GLORY SHINETH IN
THY FACE. LET NOTHING COME BETWEEN ME AND THEE.
NOTHING IN LIFE; NOTHING IN DEATH; NOTHING THROUGH-
OUT ETERNITY.

THE MUSTER-ROLL.

AN INCIDENT OF THE AMERICAN WAR.

A BATTLE had been fought,
And on the plain, unmindful of defeat
Or victory, the slain and wounded lay.
Grim death was busy still, unsatisfied,
Gathering the remnants of that sad day's spoil.

As night drew on,
Two men of God were seen, moving amid
Those scenes of death and dying agony,
As, nerved by heavenly strength, and tender care
For souls, they sought to comfort dying saints
By whispering in their ears His promises,
From whom nor life nor death can separate ;
And to the Lamb of God, whose precious blood
Can cleanse from every sin, to point the gaze
Of those whose day of life was almost past,
Their sins yet unforgiven.

And now they stand
Beside a manly form, outstretched alone.
His helmet from his head had fallen. His hand
Still firmly grasped his keen but broken sword.
His face was white and cold ; and, thinking he was gone,
They were just passing on, for time was precious,
When a faint sigh caught their attentive ears.
Life was still there ; so bending softly down,
They whispered in his ears most earnestly,
Yet with that hush and gentleness with which
We ever speak to a departing soul :—
“ Brother, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son,
Cleanseth from every sin ! ”

THE MUSTER-ROLL.

The pale lips moved,
And gently whispered—"Hush!"—and then they closed,
And life again seemed gone.

But yet once more
They whispered those thrice-blessed words, in hope
To point the parting soul to Christ and heaven :—
" Brother, the precious blood of Jesus Christ
Can cleanse from every sin ! "

Again the pale lips moved ;
All else was still and motionless, for Death
Already had his fatal work half done.
But, gathering up his quickly failing strength,
The dying soldier—dying victor—said :—
" Hush ! for the Angels call the Muster-roll !—
I wait to hear my name ! "

They spoke no more.
What need to speak again ?—for now full well
They knew on whom his dying hopes were fixed,
And what his prospects were ; so, hushed and still,
They, kneeling, watched.

And presently a smile,
As of most thrilling and intense delight,
Played for a moment on the soldier's face,
And with his one last breath he whispered—" Here ! "

O grand
And blessed death ! Quite ready for the call,
He heard his Captain's voice ! Life's battle fought—
Life's victory won—the soldier thus received
His welcome and his crown !

E. J. O.

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